

# National Parent-Teacher

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*The Official Magazine of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers*

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*In This Issue:* WHO IS TO BLAME? by Muriel W. Brown • SOME PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE by James S. Plant • I LIKE MOTHERS—FATHERS ARE NICE TOO by Phyllis Fenner • WHOSE HOME IS THIS? by C. Madeleine Dixon • CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR CHILDREN by Marion L. Faegre • TWO LOYALTIES by Thomas H. Briggs • LISTEN! DO YOU HEAR ANY ANGELS? by Bonaro W. Overstreet • THE END OF THE WORLD WAS POSTPONED by A. L. Crabb

# *Objects* OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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**T**o promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

**T**o raise the standards of home life.

**T**o secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

**T**o bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.

**T**o develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.



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NATIONAL PARENT-TEACHER

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# National Parent-Teacher

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MEMBER OF THE







God bless us every one!  
—TINY TIM



# *The President's Message*

## A Creed for Christmas

**L**IKE MANY OTHERS, my Christmas greeting includes the story of the Nativity and Dickens' "Christmas Carol." I read the former because it tells me why I observe Christmas. I read the latter because it tells me how to observe Christmas. Today I am thinking particularly about Scrooge. I did not always realize what was the matter with Scrooge. I see now that his great problem was that he had no real belief. Had he known what it means to have a deep, abiding faith in something, he could not have been the warped, dried-up soul that he was.

A superficial faith gets no further than a superficial patriotism. Either, if it is to be meaningful, must be dynamic. Ideals are not merely beautiful words, spoken or written; they are soul-stirring beliefs which compel behavior. And yet these ideals that compel our behavior are not necessarily crusading battle cries. They are gentle, simple things, and their fruits are love for our fellow men, kindness and helpfulness, courage to carry forward, vision to dream dreams that make all living richer and finer, and the ability to make those dreams a reality. It is to symbolize this faith in God, in goodness, in the brotherhood of man that we celebrate the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth, who taught us that this was the way of life we should follow.

**O**N HIS BIRTHDAY there is one gift, far more fundamental and lasting than all others, that we have it in our power to give to our children. That gift is a clearer consciousness of the human spirit and a finer appreciation of the ideals which emanate from it. With this gift comes a greater capacity for affection and human sympathy, for enjoyment of beauty, for delight in intellectual effort—all of which make possible a wider outlook and a richer world. And the best setting for this gift is a home in which the child is guaranteed love, truth, and security, for only as a child sees truth and beneficence in those whom he loves will he be inspired to strive for the attainment of these things in his own life. Blest further with a schoolroom in which provision is made for a growing acquaintance with good literature, music, and art, a child can hardly fail to become the happy, useful citizen that Scrooges only envy, never emulate.

So let us light our candles and sing our carols. Let them be to the world not merely bearers of the Christian tradition but an expression of the love, the helpfulness, the courage, and the vision in our hearts. Then, as light and sound waves travel on through space, so will the glow of the Christmas candles, the carols' lingering tune, the love and kindness behind our observance carry through all the days of the dawning year. When our belief in God is strong, when an unshakable faith in the human spirit and human ideals is our secure possession, then are we strong indeed.

*Virginia Kleber*

President,

National Congress of Parents and Teachers





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MURIEL

W.

BROWN

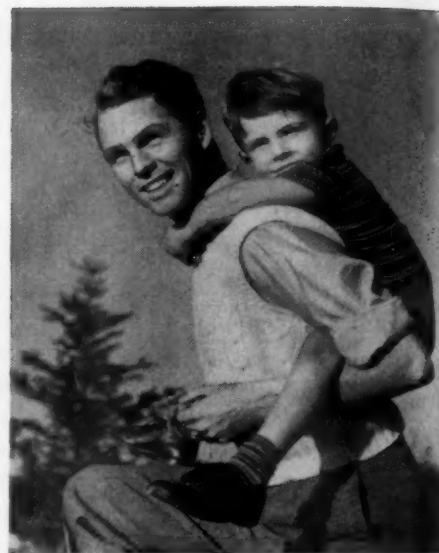
## Who Is to Blame?

SOME DAY the war will be over. In the strange stillness that will fall upon the earth when the tumult of destruction dies away, men will look upon the havoc that has been wrought and begin, once more, to build anew. When that time comes, will there be an adult generation of clear-thinking, high-minded men and women able and willing to strive together to create a world order founded upon the principles of peace?

The qualities that will be needed for this task are those for which Juvenal prayed long, long ago: a sound mind in a sound body; a brave heart wholly free from the fear of death; a heart which can "bear all hardships, cannot lose its temper over trifles, covets nothing, and is persuaded that the bitter labors of Hercules have more salvation in them than the lust and luxury of Sardanapalus"; "humility and pride; plodding business-ways and the wings of ambition; a will both stubborn and flexible"; and "above all, the grace of simplicity of purpose."

An eight-year-old was "explaining" the war to her family of dolls and animals.

"Now, you'd better understand." This very seriously. "Hitler might come over and bomb us. I can't tell you if he will, or I can't tell you if he won't. If he did, I don't know what a child would do. Any way you'd go about it, they'd have to



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depend on their mothers and fathers."

Have we who are parents and teachers today the vision, the understanding, and the skill to justify such confidence? Can we provide for our children the kind of education at home and in school which will bring them out of the war years physically sound, mentally alert, emotionally steady, and spiritually fine? This, it would seem, is our real part in a total defense program. "Blame" is a sad word, but if we fail we may live to mourn our lost opportunities.

**H**OW do fears grow up? What are the ways of building a solid morale? What are the points to keep in mind in rearing children under world war conditions? In this, the fourth article in the study course "Defense Begins at Home," these important questions and their answers receive responsible consideration.

### Measures That Make for Morale

**I**N A prewar period of confusion, high tension, and fear, it is not easy to know how to provide learning experiences which steady, ennoble, and enrich personality while combating the forces which threaten to undermine morale. Certainly the problem is not solved by turning off the radio when the war news comes on, or by hiding the morning paper. Perhaps it will help us to plan more effectively if we remember two things. In the first place, we have no strictly new difficulties to overcome. Children have always needed protection from experiences too dangerous or too intense; they have always needed guidance in their learning. In the second place, because this is so, we do not need to wait for new, special kinds of information or assistance to begin to cope with the situations we are and will be facing. All the good, sensible ideas about child development that we have been studying and practicing for years are just as good and just as sensible now as they ever were—and probably twice as useful. This being true, the best way to make sure that our wartime education is sound is to check it by the principles that have given direction to our best peacetime thinking.

The one fundamental test of the goodness of any way of dealing with a child, of caring for him in or out of an emergency, is a simple one: Does it actually give him what he needs for wholesome normal growth and development, so far as we know what those requirements are? Until recently both parents and teachers have had to rely chiefly upon experience and opinion in learning to recognize and meet the needs of childhood. Little by little, however, there has accumulated a body of tested knowledge which can serve as a basis for most of the decisions about children that we are constantly having to make.

We know, now, that human needs are determined by the way people are made and the conditions under which they must live. These needs are, broadly speaking, of three kinds: the needs that must be met if the body is to be strong—the "tree grown straight"; the needs that must be met if relationships with others are to be satisfying; and the needs that must be met if the

"attack" upon life is to be effective. For complete self-realization each one of us must have a design for living which accurately meets these needs. Suppose we take each one of these three kinds of needs and try to see what meeting each one actually involves.

### Abounding in Energy

**T**HE BEST possible foundation for mental health is physical health. In order to be well and strong, children (parents and teachers, too, if one may say so!) require these things: nourishing food, clothing that keeps the body at a proper temperature, shelter from the elements; protec-



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tion from illness and injury; a balance between activity and rest, so that energy is not used up faster than it can be replaced; and recreation that relieves tensions. The most devoted parent in Europe cannot guarantee these things today to the most beloved child, but as long as we are spared a complete collapse of our social structure we can retain a measure of control over the physical well-being of our children.

This certainly does not mean, however, that we can be satisfied with the way in which the physiological needs of our families are now being met. Thirteen million children in the United States today are in some way physically defective. Of every ten men called for army duty—but you know the rest. The point is, What are we doing about it? If I were a parent instead of an aunt—a parent with a child or children to protect from



illness, malnutrition, or nervousness—I should strive mightily to get my family to cooperate with me in developing and carrying out the best health program we could devise. This would mean (1) checking thoroughly on family food habits with someone well up in the newer knowledge of nutrition; (2) making needed changes, with a double check, for each child on actual consumption of milk, vegetables, whole grain cereals, fruit, and eggs; (3) getting to bed early enough for everyone to have sleep enough every night; and (4) planning for family fun that will keep everybody in the family interested in playing together. I should also concern myself, and hope



that my family would be concerned, with community projects through which other families, less fortunate ones than ours, might be helped to meet their basic health needs. Fears do not thrive in the atmosphere of a home where people are busy doing these things.

### Fearing No Evil

**I**MPORTANT as are the needs in this first category, the needs that must be met if relationships with others are to be satisfying are even more fundamental to a child's happiness and usefulness. Latent in all of us and easily aroused are two fears—the fear of not being wanted and the fear of being a failure. These fears are more demoralizing, once they get the upper hand, than

sheer physical terror. The only known protection against them is the feeling of security in the very bones of a child who *knows* that he is loved, that he is wanted, that he “belongs.”

The youngster that has this inner assurance is in a much better position to adjust to the stresses and strains of widespread social disturbance—even to actual physical danger and deprivation—than the child who is not so stabilized. Because he knows that his family will look out for him when he cannot take care of himself, he does not waste emotional energy trying to fight life or to run away from it.

A moving experience last summer reminded me again that happy home life in childhood can build something into the personality which fortifies and restores the soul even in the valley of the shadow of death. It was a day to feel and remember with delight—

“The handkerchief of the Lord,

Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners.”

The young soldier driving slowly along a Canadian highway was looking through the sunlight, past the blue water and the meadows, to something the rest of us could not see.

“There's nothing left of Coventry,” he said presently, “and Liverpool is badly hit. I was in a hospital there when he came over. He hit the four corners of the building, and we were crowded in the middle. I'm telling you I was plenty scared. No man is *that* brave. They weren't going to let us out, but some of the boys said ‘Heck, we're going out to help and you can't stop us.’ A bunch of us went. That big factory where they make matches had an air-raid shelter with 5,000 people in it, and some fellow in a dive bomber made straight for it—”

There was a long pause. Suddenly the boy's eyes began to shine.

“There it is! There it is!” he cried joyfully. “I was afraid I couldn't find it. I was looking for the strawberry patches where we used to come out and pick berries. Dad was a great one for outdoors. Most every Sunday we used to start off and spend the day in the country. Mom would put up a lunch, and we'd all go for the day. My dad and I used to work at the same bench at the plant before I joined up. . . . They don't know I'm coming today but they're sure going to be glad to see me. What? Me? Didn't I tell you I was an adopted child? Sure. You don't have to be born in it to have a family. I honestly think I've got the best parents in the world.”

Years ago, this little boy from an orphanage found something in a French-Canadian cottage on a back street that gave him the courage to face death in its most terrible forms and brought

him back home still eager, still young, and still believing.

### Seeing with Brave Eyes

**B**UT WHAT of those needs that must be met if children are to learn to make intelligent judgments about life and effective adjustments to life? In one of his earlier books, *The Mental Hygiene of Adolescence*, Dr. Frankwood Williams describes the mature adult as a person who has (1) the ability to see things and people as they really are, (2) the ability to meet each situation as it comes up in terms of its own requirements, and (3) the ability to accept the inevitable with a minimum of conflict.

These are learned abilities. They usually develop in children whose parents and teachers consistently help them (1) to face the realities of their own experiences; (2) to harmonize their behavior with these realities; (3) to develop a clear understanding of the meaning of such abstract ideas as truth, honesty, loyalty, and unselfishness; (4) to keep a fair balance in their learning between success and failure; (5) to take increasing responsibility for self-direction; and (6) to feel their importance as human beings, individuals who inherit the ages and carry their lives in trust for the future. With this kind of help even a very little child can begin to learn to think about people without labeling them; to understand and try to meet the requirements of life situations; and to accept with fortitude and

composure what cannot be changed.

If this is education, there are valuable opportunities for learning in the very problems of our time. Children can be taught, for example, to see that the present war is not the "fault" of one man; that men can learn to settle their differences by searching together for good solutions to common problems. They can be helped to understand the true nature of democracy; to learn to live, by living, the democratic way. They can be helped to think, concretely and practically, about their responsibilities to other members of their families, to their neighbors, to their communities; to learn to manage their own selfish impulses, their own feelings of anger, intolerance, greediness, jealousy, and pride; to want, with heart and soul, to help with the building of the Kingdom here and now, in our own "green and pleasant land."

It is not as difficult as it may seem to give this kind of guidance. The first step is probably the hardest: to make sure that we ourselves desire and are striving for maturity in our own behavior. "'Tis a rugged road," says Montaigne, "more so than it seems, to follow a pace so rambling and uncertain as that of the soul." But it helps if we remember two things: first, that the best lives are lived *fully* a day at a time; second, that no one has to meet life alone. "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." "Man has within himself that which enables him to accomplish miracles." Yes, Mr. Justice Holmes, but only if he is in touch with the Source of all wisdom and strength.

---

## Late-Winter Evening

*The day was getting bleak and old,  
The pine trees hugged up with the cold,  
Snow was sending out blue light  
And growing harder for the night.  
Far away an axe that chopped  
Double with its echo stopped.  
The single watcher in the wood  
Hardly breathed and stood and stood,  
Something was coming a good clip—  
Tat-tattoo and lippety-lip.  
It was a rabbit. Each end went  
Up and down, and then the scent  
Of the alien struck him hot,  
The rabbit flattened ears and squat  
In his latest triple track,*

*Froze, and his globed eyes burned black.  
Five feet away he suffered till  
His fear burned out, he bobbed uphill.  
The watcher went the other way,  
The beach spread dead white down the bay,  
The sea beyond was dark as soot,  
This watcher stopped there with one foot  
Ahead of the other. There could not be  
Much more to the day to see.  
Somewhere in the gathering dusk  
Wild ducks were talking, and the husk  
Of some Summer thing gave hollow  
Warning that a wind would follow.*

—ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN



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# I Like Mothers—

**I**N the magic realm of their children's imagination, parents have treasure indeed. Lacking a map to guide them to the keep, many may fail to find it; but teachers and librarians are constantly mapping the course, eager to help in the exciting search. Literature, that unfailing talisman, points them the way, and children follow with greatest joy when Father and Mother share their journey.

## PHYLLIS FENNER

**P**ARENTS are nice folks, and part of their charm lies in their almost naive love of and interest in their children. It is a well-known fact that "every goose thinks her own gosling a swan." But what about the children? What do they think of parents? Ah. That is the question. Perhaps if parents knew they would realize what an opportunity is theirs.

Two seven-year-old girls—cute little things they were, with their pigtails and their crisp cotton dresses—stood in gossip fashion near the library desk.

"My father is the *smartest* one in our family," said one.

"Well, my mother is *always* right," replied the other. "She used to be a schoolteacher."

Just what influence do you think the school can have on those young things? I have to laugh sometimes when I see how worried parents get over propaganda of one sort or another in schools. What father thinks and what mother says is what counts. *Theirs* is the opportunity to do big things with their children. But more and more do outside things take up their time, and less and less time is spent as a family group, reading and doing things together. What a shame! For childhood is short, and "the world will get them soon enough."

We were planning a Christmas play. We needed a bit of costuming. "Let John's mother make the things," said Alden. "John's mother can make *anything*." And he was serious. Where did he get that idea? Why, he got it from John, of course. "My mom" was a frequent expression with John.

Easy it is to tell in what families experiences are shared. Easy it is, too, to see where children get their ideas. The ten-year-old who made a plea

against letting "dirty foreigners" into the country didn't think it up in his ten-year-old brain. The boy who complained about the school had not been deaf when school affairs were talked over at home.

Maybe those things were true. Maybe the school was at fault. Maybe the policy of the country was wrong. But a child does not have a background for judging, and we must be careful how we disturb his loyalties. It was the morning after election. A nervous mother came in with her extremely nervous child. "I cried all night," she said, referring to her distress over the election. Then turning to her nervous child, "Remember, Jack, this is the end of American freedom." Yet she blames the school for her boy's nervousness.

A group of boys were studying a catalog, choosing books for the school library. One of them came up in great excitement. "They've listed *all* of the Oz books, sixteen dollars and a half's worth. Whew! Just think of the taxes." What had he heard at home?

**T**HERE is a certain sweetness, a certain "throat-catchingness" in the way children feel about parents and grandparents. Seven-year-old Lyn was hanging around one day, just talking. Suddenly she said "I think I'll write a book about Easter. My grandmother could tell me all about it." (I wish you could have heard the assurance, the confidence, as she spoke the word grandmother.) Wishing to lead her on, I asked how her grandmother would know. "Oh, she was there," answered Lyn. "She lived in the old days."

Grace was only in the third grade, but she was using my card catalog most energetically. "What are you looking up?" I asked. "Colonial



# Fathers Are Nice, Too

times," she answered, not stopping for so much as a second. "I want to know how they lived when my mother was a little girl."

"But, Grace, your mother didn't live then."

"She was born in 1805," said Grace.

"Why, that was over a hundred years ago," I protested.

"Oh, it was some time around then," she re-

child, that child is firmly fixed in the librarian's or the teacher's mind. Thereafter,

just by the natural process of human memory, the child gets a bit of special attention whenever she comes in by herself. Librarians and teachers should be grateful to the parent who makes herself known as So-and-So's mother.

It is no excuse that the children in a family,



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plied, going right on with her research.

Now "books is my business," and when I, in my feeble attempt to get children to read the right things, see what an opportunity parents have, what influence they have, what heroes and gods children think them, it stirs me all up.

The mother who regularly comes into the library to get books to read to her child, trying to see that she doesn't miss good books along the way, has the right idea. It is all right to say "Children should read so and so," or "My boy never heard of Robin Hood," but what have the parents done about it? The schools and libraries have hundreds to think of; the parents, only two or three. *Just So Stories* by its very style cries out to be read aloud and should be given to a child when he is young. *Johnny Crow's Garden*, the rightful heritage of every child, needs to be read aloud so that the rhythm, the nonsense, may be fully appreciated.

When a mother comes in to get books for her

being of different ages, like different things. There are things that suit all ages. Let the littlest one stretch his imagination a bit. Let the oldest one be forbearing at times. There are things good for all ages, such as the Walter Brooks books, *Freddy the Detective*, *To and Again*, or the newest one, *Freddy and the Ignoramus*; *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*; the good old *Swiss Family Robinson* and *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Wanda Gag's version, of course). And let's not forget Howard Pyle's *Wonder Clock*; Margery Bianco's *The Street of Little Shops*; Haldane's *My Friend Mr. Leakey*; Leslie Frost's *Not Really!*; Dubois' *The Great Geppy*.

Neil wanted to take *The Peterkin Papers*. I thought it too difficult. "Oh, but it is for my mother to read to me," he explained. And so he took it. A few days later I happened to catch up with him on the street. "Well, how are the

Peterkins?" I asked. "Swell," he said. "Mom reads it to Joan and me every night. Pop he sits reading his paper and pretending not to listen, but every once in a while we get a laugh out of him." What a nice feeling it gives one, the family reading aloud and getting a laugh even out of Pop from behind his newspaper. Neil will never forget the Peterkins as long as he lives. And I'll bet his children will get it read to them.

*Shen of the Sea*, that lovely book of Chinese tales by Arthur Chrisman, needs to be read aloud because of its language and because of its humor too. For everyone likes to share a funny story. His new book, *Treasures Long Hidden*, is just as excellent, although not quite as humorous.

Will James's own life story, *Lone Cowboy*, is wonderful for family reading. Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* are good, too. They will bring back Pop's boyhood reading and perhaps lead him to reminisce a bit about what he liked when he was young.

AND HERE let me say this: It is good that parents should share their likes and dislikes, too, in reading with children. Whether their likes were great literature or not, makes little difference; it is the companionship that counts. It will lead children in their turn to say "My favorite is *Black Buccaneer* by Stephen Meader, or *Black Beauty*, or *Ol' Paul* (another book to be read aloud, in either the Glen Rounds edition or the new one by Esther Shephard, illustrated by Rockwell Kent). What a thrill it gives a librarian or a teacher to have a boy ask for *Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa*, or a book by Henty, "because my Dad says they're good." "My mother wants to know if you have *Freckles*." Or maybe it is *Elsie Dinsmore*. The librarian is often grateful, no doubt, that she does not have the things suggested by parents. But the idea is good just the same.

*Tales of Baron Munchausen*, *Robin Hood*, *King Arthur*—all are better if read aloud and shared. And Padraic Colum's *Children's Homer* read aloud is as exciting as any story can be.

*The Least One*, by Ruth Sawyer, a brand new Mexican story so beautiful that it hurts, needs to be read aloud to young and old. And Kate Seredy's *The White Stag* and *The Good Master*.

Poetry is so much better enjoyed when shared by a listening group. *The Book of Americans*, by the Benets, is just about tops on the list for family reading, with its poems so full of humor and swing and just enough of history to make them interesting. Walter De La Mare's volumes of verse—*Peacock Pie* and his new one, *Bells and Grass*—are good enough to be shared.

*Mouseknees* by William White—cute old Mouse-

knees, always getting into trouble on that island of Tobago, always asking questions. "What's a ghost?" he asks. "A ghost is someone who ain't," someone tells him. "No," says another, "it's someone who is but who looks like he ain't." *Mouseknees* deserves more attention.

*Robinson Crusoe*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Wind in the Willows* are family books. They are an "open sesame" to new worlds.

A family reading circle, if only once a month, if only at holiday times, is worth while. There's nothing quite like it for pulling the family together, for giving those children something sane to remember out of a messy world.

A few years ago a certain ten-year-old boy had the habit of running into the library after school, picking up the nearest book, it seemed, and dashing out with it. The secret was out before long. His father had ordered him to bring home a library book each day. And when the father reached home the boy had to stand up and read aloud to his father, stopping to explain such words as his father thought he didn't know and look them up in the dictionary. It was no wonder the boy hated reading. When it was found out in school what was in store for the boy at home he was helped to choose more wisely. I am sure the father really had his son's interests at heart, but his method was cruel and destructive.

CHILDREN SHOULD be allowed to buy books now and then. Let them buy them for themselves. Take them to some place where they can see old books as well as new to buy, lest they become as bad as their elders and be interested only in the newest thing out. There is nothing quite so wonderful to a book lover as owning a book he loves. *Little Toot* carried by one little boy every place he goes; *The Street of Little Shops* taken to bed with the twelve-year-old when she is sick; *Silver Chief*, by Jack O'Brien, read and read by one boy; *Scottish Chiefs* read six times "because I can't find anything else quite as good"; Glen Rounds's new horse story, *Blind Colt*, as "feelingful" a story of boy and horse as one could wish; *Lassie Comes Home*, last season's sensation with the children; Arthur Ransome's stories of children and boats—all these and many more are worth reading and reading, and so worth owning.

Give a child books for Christmas, for birthdays, if only one to keep for his own. Give him a bookplate to foster his pride in his books.

A little girl was twisting on the library desk one day. Suddenly, apropos of nothing at all, she said, "I like mothers." And after a second, "Fathers are nice, too."

Do they, these parents, deserve it, I wonder? Are they making the most of their opportunities?



# Some *PROBLEMS* of Adolescence



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JAMES S. PLANT, M.D.

**P**ROBABLY the most sensible advice that the psychiatrist can give to parents concerning adolescence is that they grin and bear it. Any further advice will consist only in presentation of "some interesting, and perchance worth while, things that can be said about this stormy time." Six aspects of the problem of our adjustment to our adolescent children are here considered. This is not to say that these are all of the problems of that period or even that any one of them is exhaustively discussed.

Parents will do well to divide the subject so as to distinguish (1) those problems which belong to all parent-child relationships, (2) those problems which belong peculiarly to the adolescent age, and (3) those problems which characterize our own times (so that probably a discussion of adolescence fifty years ago would not have included them). This article touches on each of these three groups, and it is hoped that the reader will add others. It is my impression that just the matter of attempting to place any "problem" in one of these three categories will be of major help in giving it proper perspective and in indicating its proper treatment.

## Problems of Parent-Child Relationships

**W**E PARENTS would do well to copy the physician's interest in what his patient is trying to do. Aches and pains, fever, loss of appetite, fatigue—all of these are efforts on the part of the body to cope with some problem (such as an in-

fection or an unreasonable demand upon its resources). In the same way the problem child is one who is trying to solve a problem rather than to be one. This is not meant to "excuse" the child or to say that what he does is admirable or that we are simply to applaud. It means that we cannot help a child until we can see *through his own eyes* what he is trying to do. There may well be other factors in the solution, but we cannot go on to these until we see the problem as the child sees it. Perhaps he has seen the problem wrongly, but at least we must determine on what premise he has been acting.

In these days, when we cry so loudly and constantly for "tolerance," it would be well for us to begin at home. The business starts with marriage, since, of course, we don't marry people as they are but only as we *think* they are. And how many of us are tolerant of wife or husband as each emerges as a real person? At least the struggle here is on fairly equal grounds; but it is never that for the child, who is weak and has no defense against all the hopes and goals and drives of his parents. In the name of "love" we adults attempt to repair in our children the broken dreams, the frustrations, and the mistakes of our own lives. No one can object to our living, planning, and sacrificing for our children—but do we make those plans for the sake of the child's development or only because we wish that we had carried out similar plans ourselves? There is so much need, especially with adolescents, for us to try to see by our best lights the child's *own* make-



up—to help him in the achievement of goals that are his rather than our own. The child does not always know his goals, and many a youngster is confused by his parents' casting upon him too much responsibility as to choice. But when parents make the choice it must be in terms of what seems best for the child and for the personality he has brought with him, not in terms of what they want. The questions involved here are not difficult to answer if we are only willing to be honest and tolerant.

### Problems of Adolescence

**T**HE EXPERT is a person who has learned something by experience. In chemistry or in engineering or in farming we laymen admit our ignorance and consult the expert. But in living, if we speak according to strict definition, we are all experts—we have all lived. So the leader-follower

say this to him. But this change is one of the deep needs of adolescence—and, indeed, of all adult relationships. In times when we talk much of preparing for democracy, it behooves us to begin as early as possible this hand-in-hand relationship, this mutual experience of the joy and tragedy of life.

Sex has played a part in the child's life from the day of his birth, but up to adolescence this has been what one might call a "secondary" part. Questions as to where babies come from have served to keep the family stirred up. Masturbation has perhaps aroused apprehension. With adolescence, however, the sexual life becomes important in its own right. Yet it has been the experience of all of us that when "the rest of life" is meeting our needs sex is not a nagging or an ever-present problem. We dare not deny the importance of the sexual urge or any of its manifold implications in social adjustment, but it is



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relationship which belongs to the parent and the young child gradually changes, as the child comes into adolescence, to that of companions hand in hand. The change is not sudden, but most of us parents resent it and try to retard it. We find it hard to say "Let's find out"—and the child, who has so blindly followed our earlier guidance, often opens his eyes in confused amazement when we

necessary to emphasize this point, that when the adolescent is busily and happily engaged in athletic and scholastic competition preoccupation with sex is at a minimum. There is no time in all youth when it is more important that we manipulate matters toward a proper school adjustment and an evenly matched playmate adjustment.

## Problems of Our Own Times

WITH THE very rapid reduction in the time and energy involved in family tasks (due to labor-saving devices plus smaller families plus the extent to which other agencies have taken over earlier family functions) there have been many temporarily puzzling developments. Not the least of these is the fact that the extra time made available has rapidly tended to an increasing interest in our relationships to people. In crisp and fairly accurate terms this means that as we have lessened our interest in what we can do for people we have increased our interest in the meaning of personality and its effect on others. Fine and adventuresome as this is, it has momentarily raised many questions for which we have no answer. The question "What makes Johnnie tick?" opens up all sorts of interesting vistas when our vision has accommodated itself to this lifting of our eyes. Just now we know too little to do more than give fantastic answers or to hide our ignorance in words. I am not denying the great help that has come from the psychoanalysts when I say, for instance, that "the unconscious" is found useful in explanations largely because the use of this little understood term enables us to give positive answers to questions we know nothing about. To parents it is necessary to say that we must go on trying to understand why, that we must forever be struggling over the meaning of personality, over the import rather than the description of each event—but that in our genera-

tion this must be done with full knowledge that the answers we seek are still largely beyond us.

For a great many generations our institutional structure told us what was worth while in life; and today, for a great many people, it still does so. But the last three generations have seen a rapid crumbling of the stability and power of some of our most important institutions. As a result, an increasing number of people have assumed the responsibility of deciding for themselves those important questions concerning values. What is it all about? What is worth while? These questions, not too long ago, were answered for us by the structure of the society in which we lived. Now, more and more, each person answers them for himself. This change is occurring whether we like it or not and whether it is for good or for evil. To us who are interested in adolescence it means two things. First, it emphasizes the aforementioned need to meet the questions of the adolescent with "I wish I knew; let's find out." We are still able to give help to others in how to attain certain definite goals. But when the inevitable question is the definition of worth-while goals—well, these are things which we, too, wish we knew. Second, it means that our task is less to help the child to find a job and more to help him find himself. What other challenge rings so clearly in our ears? And what greater task have we today than to work toward developing in children the ability to measure their own possibilities? They need to see clearly the goals and values they are developing and the results that these will bring out of life and experience. And we adults must help.

## Some Interesting Remarks

### Class Reports of 7th and 8th Grade Pupils

- "He was a good father—not like fathers today, who do not think it is important to talk over things with their children."*
- "One handicap with people who live in a place where there are no children to play with and then move to the city is that the children are shy and backward, and are sometimes considered snobbish."*
- "Fathers don't have as much sense in taking care of children as Mothers do."*
- "To have friends you must greet them in a happy way."*
- "I don't think you can tell a 'sissy' by the way he dresses; and it is better not to judge him until you are sure."*
- "I think a good rule for family peace is 'Compromise and Coöperation.'"*
- "A good father teaches a son to have friends who are loyal."*
- "If you always imagine you are a favorite character in a comic book, you may not be able to come down to earth when you are older."*
- "A good manner of meeting people may decide your whole future."*
- "It is better to face a problem right away—before it can grow bigger and worse."*
- "Grandmothers should have a definite place in the family. They still can face difficulties and take it on the chin."*
- "I think it is important to have faith in yourself."*
- "We learn things that can't be put into words in this class."*

—FROM UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD: A Magazine for Teachers, October 1941.

# Christmas Gifts for Children

MARION L. FAEGRE

**W**HAT a joy to be able to turn our thoughts to Christmas plans for our children!

I've heard some people say, "How can we feel that Christmas is going to be anything but a mockery, when the anniversary must be celebrated in the midst of a war-torn and harassed world?" It seems to me that, rather, we should look upon the coming holiday season as a heaven-sent opportunity for nourishing the mental health that is so vitally necessary in a sick world.

We shall, undoubtedly, approach the question of Christmas gifts in a new spirit. But, since little children can't be expected to have spiritual insight, it is up to us to think carefully about filling their inner needs.

One of those needs is for accomplishment. Toys and playthings must give a child something to *do*, either mentally or physically. Things that feed his impulses to dramatize and create are imperative. Thus, a couple of bushel baskets of odd-shaped pieces of wood from a factory may please and stimulate a little boy more than an expensive set of blocks. The boy wants things that help him recreate the active life around him: trucks, large or small, a wagon, a wheelbarrow, small animals to use in playing farm or zoo—these will encourage the welling up of spontaneity and ingenuity in play. The little girl loves anything that gives her the chance to copy the activities of her mother, so a bed and bedding for her doll, cleaning equipment, or a toy stove and dishes will delight her.

During the school age years a child's desire for accomplishment is tied up closely with his need

of feeling important in his group. The age at which a boy is given a bicycle should not be decided arbitrarily by his parents; it should depend a good deal on the extent to which bicycles are used in his particular play group. Many children learn to skate between the ages of

eight and twelve, to ski between nine and thirteen, and to play football between ten and fourteen. Therefore it may be important to a child to have skates given him not at ten but at eight. If parents put off getting skis when their child is nine "because he'll so soon outgrow them," they may be depriving him of practice at the very time when it will come easily to him.

When there are several children in a family, nothing does more to satisfy the need for personal accomplishment than for each one to be "in on" gift making and planning for the others. A nine-year-old boy will get much greater satisfaction out of being helped to sew and fill a set of bean-bags and to cut holes in a board into which they may be thrown than he can get from shopping for a gift. The end results of a little girl's efforts to make clothes for her smaller sister's doll may appear crude, but they give deep joy to both maker and recipient. A twenty-cent piece of plywood and some show card colors and varnish make possible the construction of a stout, gay game board for fox and geese, parchesi, or Chinese checkers. Games, by the way, have several advantages as gifts. They encourage the child to bring his friends into his home, they provide a means of uniting the different age levels in a family, and they stimulate mental alertness.

**W**HATEVER you make or buy, remember that a child's playthings should be planned with an eye to the variety of uses to which they may be put and also to their sturdiness and lasting qualities. One good piece of equipment is worth more than a dozen flimsy gadgets that will be lost or broken almost immediately. A desk or table, a blackboard, good tools, a supply of colored papers, paints, and crayons—these are basic supplies.

The child of teen age has reached a point where he is much more interested in receiving one major gift than in being showered with many small ones. A nice piece of furniture for his room, a fine pair of ski boots, a new suit, or season tickets to a series of concerts may be the unexpected answer to a hidden prayer.

There is one gift this year that children need above all others. That gift is the sense of their home as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Let's make sure that our children have a family life in which they can enjoy peace and good will, the living symbols of Christmas.



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C. MADELEINE  
DIXON

## Whose Home Is This?

LET us consider attitudes rather than articles in the home—if attitudes are “okay,” material things will follow suit. I am taking it for granted that we know enough about the child to consider him a separate person with definite rights. In our eagerness to give the child a chance we need to make sure that we give ourselves a chance too.

Keeping some of our work and play parallel with that of the child; helping him to accept a number of grown-ups; letting him know that parents are people too; balancing discipline with his own ability to make rules; keeping his conversational demands within reason—these small balances add up to a firm and final answer to the question “Whose home is this?”

### It's Off to Work We Go

“Well, look at the time! I must get at my work right away. What are you doing this morning, Jimmie? Are you working or playing?”

Well, that's something to think about. Mother

is going to do her work. She hasn't time for more play. So neither has Jimmie. “I'm going to work,” Jimmie answers, and he seems to grow a bit taller and a bit wider because of the decision.

“I'm cleaning today. Let me see, now, what do I need?” And Jimmie's mother thoughtfully names the things she will need as she gathers them together ready for her work.

“And you, Jimmie, what are you doing and what will you need?” And she takes time to help Jimmie gather together the things that Jimmie will need for his work.

Now Jimmie's work may be some imitation of what she is doing, or it may be some business of his own that a grown-up would label play; but it's a good idea to accept at face value whatever he calls work.

The chief thing is to establish a cleancut basis for the period just ahead, a basis so definite that soon Jimmie's mother is able to say, “We are workers today, aren't we? You have your work and I have my work.” And then every once in a while she can sing out, “I've got the bed made.



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Come see how nice the bed looks." Now and then she can call out, "How are you coming with your work?" and then take time to go and see how Jimmie's work looks. Perhaps she can even give a suggestion or two.

Jimmie may be washing his soldiers; or maybe he is painting his toys with a nice wide brush and plain water. "It's a good idea to put the basin of water and the toys on a thick newspaper," his mother suggests. "It soaks up the drippy water."

Or it may be Daddy's day to tinker down in the cellar. There is Mary, close at his heels. She'll get hurt, and not only that, she will keep Daddy from getting anything done. "I guess you'll need some boards and some small blocks of wood, Mary, and here's a hammer and some nails. Here's a box of odds and ends that you may need. Hey! Suppose I make a table for you," and he starts putting some boards between a couple of wooden boxes.

"I can make my own table," Mary says. "I'm a worker," and she pulls the boards around for herself. Not as straight as Daddy was laying them, but with a satisfied sense of doing her own job.

Perhaps in five minutes Mary will be sitting on the table with the box of odds and ends emptied beside her and the tacks all in a row. Hear that, now; she is naming the tacks as though they were a family, "Mary Smith, Joyce Smith, Bobby Smith."

Daddy saws for a while and then calls out, "How are the Smiths, Mary?"

"They are going to the zoo today," Mary answers, as she solemnly inches them along the plank, careful to hop them over a knot hole.

"Good for them," Daddy shouts. "When they get to the zoo, come over and see how smooth I've made this board."

And Mary does. And after a while he takes a moment to go over and say, "How do, Smiths, do you like the zoo?" and listens to the naming by Mary of the queer animals that the Smiths are seeing.

"You may need a little oil," Daddy, who is cleaning the furnace, says to Bing, passing him an old oil can with just a dribble of oil in it. Well, *does* Bing need oil! It takes half an hour of intensive work to oil all the pipes and odd fixtures that he finds in the cellar. Once in a while he sighs contentedly. "We are working, aren't we, Daddy?"

Now each of these children has had a fair share of attention; that is true. But neither of them has been "on top" of mother or father.

Why? Neither of them was told, "Now keep away, I've got to work, don't bother me." This makes a child feel shut off so hard that he will use every device he can to get attention and to keep it, because it is so apt to be withdrawn again. He becomes a nuisance. If, instead of that, he is treated like a person in his own right and given the role of a "worker," he can watch and appreciate his parent in the same role.

This is a relationship that children need and appreciate, and goodness knows it is one that parents need and appreciate! Children get a habit of being ever present and ever demanding. It is not their demands that are so outrageous; it is that they never let up. They can't handle a balance; this is up to the adult.

Either we include them until it is devastating both to them and to us, or in our nervous fatigue we shut them off so that they have to fight their way back in agonized insecurity.

### We See Each Other Live

To learn the secret of parallel living helps. Mother says to John, "You have your things and I have mine. Isn't it fun to have our things out and have time to use them—isn't this fun on a rainy day? How are you coming?" Comradeship should be on parallel lines rather than in an endless circle. It's healthy and it's fun. It gives children a chance to get a look-in at grown-ups, and it gives grown-ups a chance to find out that children aren't just little miniatures of themselves but creatures with the most engaging imaginations and a whale of a lot of independence.

Ownership. That's the terrific set-up we some-



times let children think is normal for them. It accounts for much of the unbearable load that children may become in a household. I am speaking of normal children, who are victims of habit only.

Children should get used to several grown-ups in their daily functions. A child may wail because tonight Uncle John must tuck him in, or Auntie, or big sister. Mummy sings special songs. Auntie and big sister and Uncle John all try to imitate that special singing. It is a flop. And he has them at his mercy. He knows it and they know it.

What about letting him see them as individuals? "You are right. Mummy sings the best songs, but I—I couldn't sing a song if I tried. But I'll tell you what I can do. I can tell you something I did when I was four years old. It's about a dog. His name was Nep. He wasn't a tiny dog——"

Or, "When I tuck boys in I don't leave the blankets all smooth. I should say not. I have a special way—it's the coziest way you ever saw. It's really a cocoon that I make; you see, I tuck here and pull the sheet this way a little. Oh, no, mummy doesn't tuck that way. Mummy sings songs, and that's good on Mummy's nights, but she doesn't know about this way of tucking in cozy, cozy, cozy—that's *my* special way."

And from then on he begins to see the grown-ups as having something of their own—and something not so bad at that.

### The Right to Honest Dealing

Lying to children causes them to demand ownership. One may think, "I won't tell him Mummy is going out, or he will cry." Well, he probably will cry anyway, and harder each time that he misses her. Part of the crying is because Mummy is not here, but part of it is that he doesn't know what to expect or what to believe. Why, his mother went away for a week not long ago. She is not here tonight. Maybe she is going away for a week again. Maybe she is going away forever!

That's too hard on a child. Anything that is part of a normal, regular life is something that he has a right to the truth about: "Mummy is going out. All mothers go out sometimes. But do you know what! They come back. They come back to their boys and girls." When this is once established, parents can tell the truth. "Daddy is going away for five days. Hold up your fingers and I'll count the days. Then he is coming back to Johnnie."

"Mummy is going to see her mother for six days. All mothers go to see their mothers sometimes, but, Molly, they come back. That's what's nice. Away they go, one, two, three, four, five, six days, and back they come, and they stay and stay and stay at home for a long, long time."

Or, "Bill goes out to play at three o'clock. Mother goes out to play at eight o'clock. Everybody goes out to play. Even George's mother who lives on Eighth Street goes out to play. She goes at three o'clock while George plays in the yard. Big people and little people go out to play. I guess they all like to have fun sometimes."

Not only should the child be clear about adults going and coming, but he has a right to a feeling of security. "Somebody always stays with Molly. That's good. Big sister or Auntie or Uncle John or Maud who lives next door or the cook. Somebody always stays with children. Of course. They like to have somebody in the house with them. That's the way children are. Somebody always stays and then what? Their fathers and their mothers came home again."

And so these grown-ups aren't just puppets invented for the child. They are good to him and he has a grand time with them, but they are people too. Well, well. It's not bad, either. There is a pleasantness in the house because Daddy and Mummy are not tired out with nothing but children all the time.

### Regulating the Rules

Watch out, though; the mothers and fathers may be getting topheavy. They may be just plain bosses, and who owns the home then? Well, there is just one thing to do about that. When they have to boss they can be clear about it and sure, fairly sure anyway, that they get results. They



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can say "of course" and mean it. Every person in the world is bossed by some one or something at times. That is all right. But if father is a smart father, he will let Johnny and Molly take over the bossing of themselves whenever he can. "Here's an alarm clock. I'll put it in the yard; then when it goes off at five o'clock you can come in by yourselves without my calling you." The bossiness is then a kind of shared firmness and helps to give a small child a start on his own.

But that isn't enough. A home has to have rules, but it must have choices to balance the rules. "Breakfast is over, and you have your chores to do. But say, fellow, you had better be thinking what you are going to do after that. You can choose then, you know—it will be your turn to say what you are going to do."

And now, with a fifty-fifty atmosphere over work, play rights, and privileges of both children and grown-ups, with a balance between rules and choices, there is still another major conflict in ownership.

### Talk Is a Mutual Matter

Verbal communication, conversation? Yes, that's it. Who owns the conversation in the home? Sometimes stuffy grown-ups own just about all of it, taking time out only to shout out "do" or "don't" to the children. Sometimes children own it. And that is awful too. "Why did he do that, Daddy, wh—y—y?" "Where—what—why?"

Ah, somebody asking something, somebody little and very appealing. How that tickles the adult vanity. Now the grown-up may be a teacher. He

explains and tells and explains some more. He gets a habit of doing that. This childish wish for wisdom must be met. And it is met and met and met again. And before long the "why" child is sprung full grown into the midst of the happy family. And is that a way of owning the grown-ups, of owning the home! Now he is having just as hard a time as the child who must be shut off because he is never included in family talk.

There is a magic aid here, however. Sometime when Billy demands eagerly and worriedly "What is the derrick doing, Daddy?" and Daddy is wearily gathering together his knowledge of mechanics and electricity and materials, Daddy can just stop gathering and say quietly, "Listen and watch, Billy, and then after a while you tell me what it is doing."

There will be a long silence, and it feels good to both Billy and his father to have that silence. After a while Billy will probably look at his father and say, "It's moving." And that's that. And, because he doesn't need to strain, Billy will probably start being a derrick with his bending back and stretching legs, because Billies really think by *doing* more than they think by *saying* if proud fathers don't hurry them through this small boy stage into wordy explanations.

To own or to be owned is no fun in a household. Live and let live. Build up a chance both to appreciate and to be appreciated independently, with a balance of sharing and overlapping in work and play. Because, really, parents and children are not identical twins.

*This is the fourth article in the parent-teacher study course: "How We Grow."*

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## Christmas Eve: Traffic Jam

*We were in a moody plight  
waiting for the traffic light,  
watching Christmas shoppers throng  
and the traffic creep along.*

*Then, the ashen moment blazing,  
on the windshield we were gazing  
through the herald snowflake fell.  
Knowing it a fragile shell  
we laid fingers on our lips.*

*It had crosses at the tips  
of a star so finely drawn  
that in seconds it was gone.  
Where the star had come to pass  
moisture trickled down the glass.  
When the traffic light turned green  
there was no snow to be seen.*

*Caution passed then when the star did,  
and our lips, no longer guarded,  
found the night and all thereunder  
vibrant with a newborn wonder.*

—LOUIS STODDARD

# Listen . . . Do You Hear Any Angels?



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**W**INGS across the sky this Christmas eve will not be angel wings. The sudden light that makes the plain people of earth look up with startled eyes will not be the light of a new star. The sound that makes them huddle in awe

will not be the sound of heavenly voices choiring, "Peace on earth, toward men good will."

The trudging forms along the highways of the world will not be those of shepherds and wise men who follow a guiding light to find a savior. They will be the burdened, emaciated forms of men and women and children who leave behind them the burning towns that have been their homes and who plod wearily, without guide or goal, into a winter bleakness where even a stable would be luxury.

It is not going to be easy for any of us, this year, to say blithely, "A merry Christmas, and a happy New Year!" Yet if there was ever any other time on this fretted planet when common folk were as defenseless as they are now—as subject to the whims of tyranny and ruthless ambition—it was at the time when Christ was born. And to that dark day we are indebted for the only weapon we have against the forces of darkness: the weapon of love; the incredibly naive and incredibly powerful doctrine that we are all children of God and brothers one of another.

No physical force ever devised by any tyrant has proved strong enough to overcome the spiritual force inherent in this idea of brotherhood. The faith of our fathers has, indeed, lived on "in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword." But now, when we are so terribly and so constantly aware of what man has done to man, we must be on guard lest our faith be overcome by a quite different enemy, by an insidious Fifth Column of the spirit—by our own reluctance to declare a faith that embarrasses us by its good cheer in a time when good cheer seems horribly misplaced, by its hopefulness in a time when hopefulness seems but a will to be blind. If once we feel that we are making fools of ourselves when we say "Merry Christmas"; if once we feel that we are even showing bad taste in flaunting the fact that we are still able to be merry—then the finest hope that ever came into this fumbling world will be a lost hope. This is a year when we all have to be, like St. Francis, deliberate fools of God. This

BONARO W.

OVERSTREET

is a year when we have to say "Merry Christmas" with all the vigor of our souls because there is no apparent sense in saying it at all.

What shall we make of Christmas in our American homes this year? How shall we celebrate this Day of our Lord? I, for one, say that we must celebrate it with every lovely ritual the past has made dear—for only thus can we declare our intention of making those rituals belong to the future.

Christmas is the odor of evergreen boughs. Let it be so this year. Christmas is the sound of bells, the blur of candle flame through frosted windows, the hospitable door opened wide to friends. Christmas is beribboned packages, given and received. Christmas is the almost intolerable expectancy on the faces of children. Christmas is the family circle around the table. Christmas is song. Let it be so this year. More than ever, let it be so. Let all that the Christ-day has meant to us be so established in the memories of our children that nothing can destroy it.

In every conquered country of Europe, the new forces of barbarism have shown that they fear Christianity. They have reason to fear it . . . so long as we believe in it. They will no longer have reason to fear it if they can, by any means, make us ashamed of our faith and our hope.

There is a story that comes out of one of the bombed villages of France. In front of the ruin that had been their home were an old woman, her daughter, and her granddaughter. The two grown-ups were stolid, heavy, expressionless with grief. They sat humped on the broken steps that led to no doorway . . . and their eyes said nothing at all. But suddenly the child, at play among the rubble in the street, laughed gaily and broke into song. Stabbed by the sound, her mother started to her feet, angrily. But the grandmother put out a restraining hand. "Don't," she said. "Don't stop her. The children will sing again."

It is a story to remember this Christmas. It is a story to repeat as a declaration of will, of unalterable intention: the children will sing again. Let part of their habit of song come from this Christmas. Let them in this year, and in all the years ahead, lift up their voices: "Silent Night" . . . "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" . . . "O, Little Town of Bethlehem." . . .

# The End of



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I GUESS the life of Old Plum Springs marked the transition period between the eras of home-made and store-bought clothes. A good many of the older people still wore clothes made at home. The younger generation, however, was developing a taste for store clothes. We boys had a suit a year from either Zahm's or Gurbin's in Bowling Green; one a year, no more. Such additional clothes as were required for work were produced at home.

At that time we did not regard Easter as the proper time to shift from the old to the new. That came later. Rather oddly, we made the change on the last day of school. We wore our annual new suits for the first time then. After that they served for Sundays and gala days until another Last Day brought another new suit. It was a fixed convention, any infraction of which would have left a bad mark upon the offender.

The last day was celebrated with songs and recitations. The teacher always "treated," that is, she passed around stick candy in abundance. All our parents came.

"I think Hubert Spalding had the prettiest suit there today," my mother would say that night. Then she would add this exquisite postscript, "Except yours, Alfred." All over Plum Springs mothers would be making such comments, climaxed by such exquisite postscripts.

But everything happened the year Miss Roemer taught the school. Late in August the weather turned dry. By October Plum Springs looked like a desert. November was dry. The first week in December the Spring went dry. It seemed that my world was crashing about my ears. I loved that spring. It had never gone dry before in the history of man. It tried two or three times to make a comeback, but after awhile it gave up. The community then was forced to bore a most unromantic well.

CHRISTMAS—the Last Day of school —and no new suits! Was it the end of the world? By no means . . . In Old Plum Springs, as everywhere and always, the Christmas spirit emerges triumphant out of threatened disaster to shine with clear light in unexpected places

Everything was parched and dry all fall. There was almost always a wagon or two at the Willow Pond, and every wagon had in it a couple of barrels, for almost every farmer was hauling water for his stock. Dust hung heavy in the air. The leaves didn't turn to russet and gold; they simply dried up and fell off. The only thing that seemed able to withstand the ravages of that arid autumn was the fine field of goldenrod that stretched from the Elm Tree back toward Long Hollow. The flame of that field was the only relief we had from drabness that fall.

MOST of us boys raised a small tobacco patch of our own from which we paid for those Last Day suits, and we usually had a modest amount of Christmas money left over.

"I've got seven dollars left," John Horsley told me once. "Yessir, I bought my suit and I got seven dollars over."

"Seven dollars! You can't spend seven dollars for Christmas."

"All I want for Christmas is two dollars. That's plenty. I'm a-going to Louisville on one of them Spring Excursions."

Our tobacco was pretty good the year of the dry fall. We cut it and got it into the barn, but we needed a spell of wet weather to soften the tobacco before it could be stripped and carried to market. And we didn't have that spell of wet weather! Never a cloudy day in October. "We'll get rain in November," everybody said. But the skies of November were cloudless. The tobacco in the barns dried to such a crisp that it crumbled to dust if you touched it.

We broke an immemorial custom by not going hunting on Thanksgiving because it was best to take no chances of starting fires.

School was out that year on Christmas Eve. It was a chastened community when the leaves of November fluttered down from the calendars. There was a heaviness in the hearts of everyone.



# the *World* Was Postponed

A. L. CRABB

We had known dry spells before, but nothing like this. We had food, but what good was food if there was no water for man or beast? The Willow Pond was going down fast, and Pawpaw Spring had dwindled from a stream as large as a fat man's arm to one the size of a slim man's finger. Some said it was the beginning of the end of the world. The scholars at Plum Springs were saddened; the boys had given up hope for their Last Day suits. In such a time new suits seemed trivial. Pawpaw Spring went dry. We carried water for the school from the Comfort Spring, a mile away. Our play was listless, and generally we just huddled about in small groups, looking dazed and apprehensive.

My father, who was incurably committed to his illusions, would say, "The sun looked red tonight when it went down. Maybe we are going to get a rain." But Wes Lowe, who was a pessimist, would answer, "Don't ever expect to see any more rain. People's got too mean."

The Last Day was on Christmas Eve, Friday. A hot sun swung through a cloudless sky. We got to school before Miss Roemer rang the bell. We didn't feel much like playing, so some of us foregathered at the blacksmith shop. Mr. Gray was shoeing Old Man Mike Elkin's black mule, and he was sweating profusely. He finished with one shoe and went over to his water bucket, from which he drank sparingly. "That bucket of water has already lasted me two days, and it's got to get me through another. You boys think the end of the world is nigh, as the Good Book says?"

"I don't," croaked Old Man Mike Elkin. "My left knee is a-achin' with the rheumatiz, and that's a shore sign of rain."

"Huh?" said Mr. Gray. "You say it's a-goin' to rain?"

"Tomorrer'll be a wet day. Yessir, my old left knee hasn't been wrong yet."

"If it rains afore Sunday you don't owe me a cent for shoeing this mule."

Before night the word had gone all over the community that Old Man Mike Elkin's left knee prophesied rain, and there were those who took hope and others who scoffed.

"The sun was redder than common when it set tonight," said my father.

"It don't rain out of a red sunset," said Wes Lowe. "It takes clouds."

OLD Man Mike's left knee and my father's optimism relieved the strain somewhat. I went to sleep more peacefully that night than I had for weeks. And when I waked sometime in the night it was raining! For a minute or two I suffered the keenest torture, fearing that the rain would stop. Then from the sound of it, I knew it would not . . . we would get our Last Day suits after all. Now that it was raining, those suits were no longer trivial.

When I waked it was still pouring down. I dressed quickly. My mother was cooking breakfast.

"I felt that prayer of Brother Taylor's Sunday would bring it," she said simply, as she rolled the dough for the biscuits. I plunged out into the rain and went to the barn. The tobacco had lost some of its brittleness but it couldn't be worked.

"It will be all right tomorrow if it doesn't turn

cold," said my father.

It rained all day, and we waded joyfully to school. All the next day we stripped that tobacco, my father and my brother and I. We stripped against time, for the next day would be Sunday and we didn't strip tobacco on Sunday.

"We'll get it done," said my father. And we did. We stripped that night by the light of lanterns, but we had finished by midnight.

Sunday morning it was still cloudy but cold.

The drouth was broken. No longer did the cows look thirsty, and the chickens had broken their interminable huddle around the cast-off iron skillet into which we had poured what water we could spare. The world's end had been postponed.



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Brother Taylor's sermon was one of thanksgiving. After preaching was over he called Oscar Keller and me aside. "This isn't the first time I've found an ox in a ditch on the Sabbath," he said. "Homer Floyd fell out of the loft of his barn yesterday while he was stripping his tobacco. I don't think he's bad hurt, but he's in bed, and so is his daddy, with the chills. That tobacco has to be stripped today. It'll be out of season tomorrow."

That afternoon we stripped Homer Floyd's tobacco.

Monday morning, before daybreak, the wagons began to rumble down the rocky hill on their way to the tobacco market at Sunnyside. But our wagon didn't rumble among the rest. It was ready to go when one wheel, yielding to the devastating dryness it had undergone, collapsed. We propped the wagon up, took the wheel off and hauled it to Mr. Gray's blacksmith shop. But he said he couldn't get to it until Tuesday afternoon.

I went to school, but I might just as well have been elsewhere; I couldn't study. On Wednesday that tobacco went to Sunnyside. Late in the afternoon I got back home with the check for it warm in my pocket. Homer Floyd went with me next day to buy the suits.

At ten o'clock we were in Zahm's store. Mr. Zahm met us. "You would be wanting to see some suits, yess?"

We nodded. I told him I wanted a blue one.

"He wants a blue one," said Mr. Zahm. "Listen," he said, with great earnestness. "You want a blue suit, and I have no blue suit. It is terrible, yess, but I have no suits at all. I ordered, yess, but it didn't rain, and then I didn't order again. No, and this week what do I have? A parade. Yess, they come in, and suits they want, blue suits, brown suits, gray suits they want, and yesterday your size I sold out. It should make me cry, the business I lost. For this young gentleman," pointing to Homer, "I have suits, very fine suits, but with your size I should cry. But I will absolutely free make you a present of a beautiful necktie, solid silk."

I thanked him for the tie and set out in a half run for Gurbin's store. Mr. Gurbin had the same sad tale. He gave me a beautiful tie and told me that I might find a suit at Sam Muscovitz's store on lower Main. But I didn't.

All right, I'd wear my old suit on the Last Day. Practically every other boy had gone to town on Tuesday, when Zahm and Gurbin were still stocked with suits. I had already fixed up some witty remarks I would use when I got to school Friday morning, to defend myself.

Homer was greatly worried because I didn't have a suit. I told him not to be silly; I could wear two new neckties, anyhow, if I wanted to. I

stopped suddenly. Where was my other tie? I had the one Mr. Gurbin had given me, but where was the other? My mind ran rapidly back along my course during the day. I couldn't remember having it since I left the Zahm store. So I went back there to look for it. Sure enough, I had left it there. The clerk went to get it, and Mr. Zahm himself brought it to me, his eyes shining.

"Everywhere, I hunt for you," he said. Something in his manner caused my heart to quicken. "I have your new suit now."

It seems that just after I had left his store a drummer had come in with an advance line of samples of next year's suits. One was of especially comely appearance, and Mr. Zahm's practiced eye had seen that it would fit me; so he had prevailed upon the drummer to leave it with him. I looked it over. It pleased me beyond words. I tried it on. Mr. Zahm beamed with approval. But it was so fine a suit that I feared I couldn't afford it. Mr. Zahm beamed even more. It was a sample, he said, and sample suits came cheaper than regular ones. He wouldn't sleep so well if I didn't have a new suit for the Last Day. Well, I bought it, and the price left me an amazing balance for Christmas. I left the store with my suit and my two new neckties, and Homer and I mounted old Effie and started home. Homer was a quiet boy ordinarily, but he talked all the way back. He had his new suit, and he had a beautiful plaid shawl for his mother and a dollar watch for his father. I asked him what he had in his other pocket. He drew it forth. It was a bottle of chill tonic for his father. No, his father hadn't sent for it. Homer had just thought it was needed.

LOOKING back, I know that in Homer Floyd that December afternoon long ago I caught one of my clearest glimpses of the Christmas spirit. When, much later, the word came to me that Homer would not be coming back from France, the picture of that afternoon arose before me as a scroll. Not firecrackers for himself, but chill tonic for his ague-plagued father! There came a lump in my throat. Chill tonic! The Christmas spirit!

The Last Day was fine and clear and crisp. Those days of dryness and dust and hauling water and suspense seemed long ago. We got to school early, and Solomon was never more conscious of his finery than we. We had a modest program and sang some Christmas songs, and Miss Roemer treated us liberally to stick candy. We stood out on the playground and talked and jested, mostly about our suits; but we didn't play any, for those would be our best clothes until the next Last Day.

And that night at the supper table my mother said, "I think Homer Floyd's was the prettiest suit there today—except yours, Alfred."



# What *Health* Practices Shall We Follow?

**Good Eating Habits Should Be Formed.** Food of the proper quality and quantity should be eaten, as a rule in three adequate and regular meals, with nothing but milk or orange juice taken between meals. Candy and other sweets are best eaten at a regular meal. Breakfast should never be omitted. Meals should be approached happily and without hurry. Food should be chewed thoroughly, never bolted. Though good food habits are most easily formed early, it is never too late to form them.

**Sleep and Rest Are Necessary.** Everyone needs a certain amount of sleep and rest with open windows. Fresh air during sleep is important. The usual standard for sleep is eight or nine hours, but some persons require more. A regular bedtime should be established and adhered to. Loss of sleep for a night or two is not necessarily serious, but if too often repeated it is always so, affecting both physical and mental health. Even during waking hours a certain amount of rest is necessary; the amount needed should be determined for the individual. Rest may be provided by change of occupation.

**Exercise Is Important.** Exercise is needed to prevent aging of the body's tissues and to keep the body in good condition. One hour of regular daily exercise out of doors is recommended. Walking, sports of various types, setting-up exercises, and gardening are all recommended.

The mind as well as the body needs exercise. One should keep mentally alert and up to date. Some indications of the youthful outlook are open-mindedness toward improvement, interest in others, willingness to accept the new, lack of prejudice, lack of bitterness, and interest in life.

**Personal Cleanliness Should Be Maintained.** Cleanliness is absolutely essential to comfort and mental assurance. The modern manner of living results in more exacting standards of cleanliness than were required of our ancestors. The body should be bathed frequently—daily if possible—with plenty of water and good soap. Deodorants should never be depended on as substitutes for thorough cleansing, although they are useful in addition to cleansing. The hands require frequent washing. The fingernails should be kept clean, smooth, and reasonably short. The mouth and the teeth should be cleaned at least twice daily. Salt water is an inexpensive and effective mouth-

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wash. The hair and scalp should be kept clean; many recommend a shampoo at least once a week.

**Good Posture Is Needed.** Good posture maintains the organs of the body in their normal positions and thus promotes general health. Poor posture may cause physical disturbance of several types, including constipation and fatigue. In working within the family to develop good posture, one should consider nutrition, the effect of recent illness, fatigue, the suitability of clothing, furniture, and equipment, physical defects, emotional difficulties, and bad habits.

In standing, walking, or sitting, the trunk should be held erect, the chest lifted up, the head erect, the chin up and in, the shoulders even and level, and the abdomen in and up. In lying down, lie on the right side or partially on the face.

**Proper Elimination Is Essential.** Our sedentary manner of living, together with the use of highly refined foods, has made the regular elimination of body wastes a real problem. Care should be taken to include in the diet bulky and laxative foods. Plenty of water—six or eight glasses daily—will help. Regular habits can and should be built up. Much of the difficulty encountered in this matter is due to lack of promptness in responding to the impulse for elimination.

**Good Mental Habits Are Important.** Happiness and success depend largely upon mental habits. Worry, anger, envy, hatred, and other destructive emotions should not be permitted to gain control. Fear is the greatest of all foes to happiness and serenity and should be resisted in every possible way. Aimless daydreaming and wishful thinking are to be avoided. The wholesome, successful person is known by his ability to decide quickly, to persevere in any given undertaking, to make and keep friends, and to welcome new ideas and experiences. A good balance between work and play is desirable.

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# Two Loyalties

**D**EMOCRACY needs a better understanding of itself. It cannot be successful—it cannot even persist—unless the people understand it and give to it a loyalty manifested by continuous intelligent action.

Probably not since pre-Revolutionary times have the minds of our people been so directed to a reexamination of the meanings and implications of democracy as during the past decade. The challenge of opposing types of government and society is no less serious than the challenge of hostile arms. In fact, military might has been set in operation primarily because of a belief that democracy is ineffective, unworkable, dangerous. Many a citizen who is ready to take up arms to defend democracy has not yet clarified his concept of what he wants to preserve. It is futile to defeat Hitler and Mussolini in military combat unless we are ready to utilize victory to make democracy what it should be and willing not only to enjoy its privileges but to assume its obligations.

During the past two years there have been many important publications that will help anyone who uses them to learn what democracy is and what rights and responsibilities it offers and demands. However, a brief analysis of the primary loyalties of democracy and their bearing on democratic privilege and responsibility may help to clarify the issue in the minds of many parents and teachers.

It has been said that the first two loyalties of the free man are loyalty to himself as a human being of dignity and worth and loyalty to the principle of human equality and brotherhood. Without question these loyalties are basic to a democracy.

Ideally, democratic society is composed of persons who have equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal obligations, each according to his natural and developed powers, to share in determining the policies, the programs, and the progress of the nation. Actually, too few of the citizens of our country know all of their privileges and responsibilities. They cannot know what these are—to say nothing of exercising their rights and performing their duties—unless they really understand what democracy is. For this understanding the home and the school share in the primary responsibility.



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## The Positive Approach

**N**O PERSON will be either jealous to demand his rights or persistent in carrying out his obligations to others unless he has a genuine respect for himself as a human being of dignity and worth. Nowadays there is general recognition of the tremendous differences in individuals, both in the kind and in the extent of their talents, and there is a common tendency among parents as well as among teachers to emphasize shortcomings and weaknesses instead of achievements, potential or actual. Like the dentist, they look for defects. No human being, child or adult, ever has his self-respect built up in this way. And without self-respect he cannot develop the loyalty to himself that makes possible effective loyalty to his fellow men.

Every human being has strengths as well as weaknesses. Everyone is good for something or can make himself so. The sooner the family, the school, and the child himself find out what peculiar strengths he has, the sooner he will gain the self-respect and the stimulating hope that move him forward with confidence to significant achievement for others as well as for himself.

Almost everyone knows some boy who has disappointed his parents and his teachers and has been berated for it; thus handicapped, he is unable to do what they want him to do—namely, follow a path that tradition has laid out for others, with

## THOMAS H. BRIGGS

different natural gifts. Such a boy is marked a failure because his weaknesses have been emphasized, and yet eventually he often becomes successful, perhaps outstandingly so, by utilizing the strengths which, though they were present all the time, he had to discover for himself. How much earlier he would have arrived at his success if the home and the school had only realized that his assets were more important than his liabilities. How much greater that success might have been if by emphasizing and directing the development of his assets, the home and the school had early given him self-respect and self-confidence!

### The School and Personal Dignity

BY AND large, the school probably does a better job of democratizing young people than the home does. The trend of modern education is to provide equality of opportunity; educators realize, however, that equality is seldom identity. Thus we have the new individualized teaching, especially in the lower grades; we have the junior high school program to explore the peculiar talents and abilities of pupils, at the same time revealing to them by general courses the various fields of learning and of vocation; and we have the wide variety of elective courses in senior secondary schools. Together with these there is developing a program of systematic personal guidance supplementing but not replacing the guidance given by parents. If this program concentrates, as it is attempting to do, on learning each pupil's possibilities for success, on revealing these possibilities to him, and on providing means

THE series of articles based on the recent findings of the Educational Policies Commission reaches the count of four with this able presentation by Thomas H. Briggs, co-author with Dean Russell of the valuable book *The Meaning of Democracy*. The two loyalties herein set forth may well be described as the foundation stones of the democratic character, forming, as they do, the basis of belief in the dignity and worth of the individual citizen.

for their wise development, it cannot fail to promote the loyalty of every pupil to himself.

Another significant contribution by the schools to the development of self-respect and self-loyalty is found in their treatment of behavior. Gone from all but the poorest schools is the old discipline that depended on physical force—"keeping in," floggings, and similar punishments. It may safely be asserted that in most schools the deportment of children and youth is better than it is anywhere else. Most children are happy in school and eager to get back when vacation is over.

The schools have recognized, even if they have not yet entirely achieved their ideal, that behavior is determined chiefly by the attitude of pupils toward their work. If they think that it is worth their effort, they don't find time to misbehave. If they are not convinced, who can blame them for exercising their intelligent ingenuity to get out of it? That is precisely what their elders do. Nothing contributes more to a young person's recognition and preservation of his own dignity and worth than success at a task that he feels will contribute to his growth and to his ultimate happiness or success.

### Theirs Is to Reason Why

FROM THE early days of mankind, adults have held that children and youth should be taught unquestioning, implicit, and immediate obedience. There can be no doubt that such obedience contributed no little to the comfort of those who gave the orders. Nor can there be any doubt that children and youth learn much from the decisions of their elders. Gradually, however, we have learned that unquestioning blind obedience to



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orders given by those who are wise and benevolent can result in a habit of similar obedience to those who are not so wise and are often selfish and even malevolent. Certainly unthinking obedience does not contribute to the development of loyalty to self, to human dignity, which is the right of even a child, or to growth in power to make sound decisions on the basis of well-considered facts. The wise parent and the wise teacher help children to understand why they should act in a desired way, even though this method may take time and involve personal inconvenience. When an emergency demands an unexplained order, children who have previously been respected as growing personalities are likely to have faith enough in their superiors to obey first and ask questions afterward.

### The Materials of Self-Respect

A PERSON CANNOT respect himself as a human being of dignity and worth if his stomach is empty, if his clothes are ragged and dirty, or if his home is not to him a pleasant place. There is a common misconception of the reason for Federal grants to improve the condition of the unfortunate — through work provided by the WPA, through the NYA grants, or through other means—and there is a similar misconception of the work of benevolent individuals and organiza-



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tions that furnish respectable clothes and lunches for needy children. Such contributions should not be considered "charity." Their full justification lies in the fact that they enable the recipient to maintain or to regain his self-respect, to be loyal to himself as a human being of dignity and worth.

Now these good results are impossible if the recipient of aid looks on it as patronizing and

humiliating charity or if he comes to feel that he has a natural right, with or without effort on his part, to share in the accumulated wealth of others. The weakness of the current benevolences of the government as well as of private individuals lies in this: Skilled effort is not used to help the recipient regain his sense of personal dignity and worth; skilled effort is not used to help him realize his responsibility to use his powers and privileges to promote the welfare and happiness of others.

Society cannot be content with mere temporary lessening of human misfortune and discomfort. It is possible to restore self-respect for a time by filling a stomach or clothing a body or providing a comfortable place to sleep, but it is far more important to remove the causes of degradation. Some of these causes are economic, but a highly important one, with which the schools have deep concern, is the failure of many pupils ever to have developed an understanding of their own personal importance, to others as well as to themselves, or to have acquired a sense of personal dignity. Both parents and teachers should understand and accept the challenge implied in this fact. The problem should be studied especially by parent-teacher associations, so that the most effective means may become generally known.

### The Need to be Needed

ONE OF the important results of democracy is that the individual citizen has a feeling of "belongingness." If a person feels that he is an outcast, that he is not desired in a social group, that he does not have the rights and privileges accorded to his fellows, his dignity is insulted and his effectiveness is impaired. Someone has written: "What people cannot endure is not belonging. The tragedy of capitalism—unemployment—does not inhere in the phenomena of want and privation, but in the spiritual disintegration of large numbers of people from the group culture. Hitler can feed millions of his people acorns, and yet, if he integrates them in a spiritual union with their community, they will be happier than they were when receiving generous doles from a regime which gave them no such spiritual integration with the herd."

The schools on the whole do a pretty good job of inculcating in pupils a feeling of belongingness. The poor and the rich, the black and the white, the dull and the bright, the homely and the handsome are likely to have in the classroom a feeling that their personalities are respected. School-directed clubs for activities of various kinds contribute to this feeling. Pupils are proud of their schools and of being members of a group



that accomplishes something of obvious worth. The task of the schools is, of course, not only to provide programs of study that are of maximum worth to each pupil but also to make each pupil understand this worth and appreciate the privilege of striving *together* for valuable powers and skills.

### Democracy Is Brotherhood

SO MUCH for the importance of a sense of personal dignity and worth. In a democracy it is also necessary that everyone be taught to respect the personal dignity and worth of every one of his fellows. The natural human being learns more easily to respect himself than to respect his fellows, especially those who are not blessed by nature or by inheritance with the same kinds of gifts that he has. Few learn early to say

"Who has given to me this sweet,  
And given my brother dust to eat,  
And when will his wage come in?"

Consequently, if democracy is to prevail, the young must understand that everyone has his talents and that, whatever they are, the world has need of them. Respect for self is essential, but it must be supplemented with sincere respect for others.

Equality has always been a slogan of democracy. No intelligent, observant person can believe that all persons are born with equal abilities or that all can acquire equal abilities. But democracy holds that every person should have rights, privileges, and opportunities in proportion to such powers as nature has endowed him with. Our civilization has gone an unprecedentedly long way toward this idea; but it still has a long road ahead. Special privileges in education are common in almost every community; educational opportunities in some sections of the country are far beyond those in others. Just as a nation could not endure half slave and half free, so a democracy cannot prosper until all its children have equal opportunity for education.

No person, not even the best, can ever become perfect; but every person, even the least gifted, can improve. It is the job of the home and of the school to find what are the living seeds of worth and then to furnish the best possible opportunity, encouragement, and direction for their growth. The sooner the individual child is made conscious of his special talents and possibilities, the sooner he will develop loyalty to himself and the desire and power to grow in the ability to exercise his talents effectively for the good of the human brotherhood.

### Responsibility: Privilege in Reverse

DEMOCRACY OFTEN respects a citizen more than he respects himself. Self-respect and loyalty to self result in the use of one's rights, privileges, and obligations. Democracy guarantees the right to inquiry, to the evaluation of all facts that pertain to the solution of a problem, to the unhindered formulation and expression of judgments, to freedom to attempt to influence others and to share in the making of public policies, and to many other essential activities.

Yet many persons who enjoy the benefits of democracy fail to use the rights that it provides. Democracy furnishes opportunity for extended free education; yet there are still many young people who drop out of school as soon as the law permits it. It is almost unheard of for a person to refuse an inheritance of material property. Would anyone refuse the inheritance of the spiritual and cultural values of the race, which are transmitted to him through education, if he understood their worth to him and to the civilization of which he is rapidly becoming an integral part? It is a responsibility of education to make every citizen not only conscious of his rights but aware of the necessity for him to exercise them.

Loyalty to self, important as it is, will not alone serve or save democracy. There must also be loyalty to the principle of human equality and brotherhood. Society is wealthy and strong only as all of its resources—that is, all individuals—are developed to the maximum of their natural powers and filled with a sense of responsibility for the altruistic use of those powers. Education, both in the home and in the school, should convince the young that no one can be happy and prosperous at the expense of others and that the greater the general happiness the greater the possibility of personal happiness.

### Youth Looks to Its Elders

HOWEVER, even when young people are convinced of the wisdom of loyalty to the principle of human equality and brotherhood, they need the direction of parents and teachers to find opportunities for service, direction of effort, and appreciation of the results. A spirit of altruism alone is not sufficient. Altruism must develop into effective service through acceptance and faithful discharge of responsibility.

These two loyalties, loyalty to self and loyalty to society, are fundamental to the preservation and promotion of democracy. To inculcate them is one of the major challenges to parents and teachers who wish to make and keep the American way of life worth defending.

# The Role of the P.T.A. in a Program of Defense

**I**N RESPONSE to the many inquiries from both individuals and agencies concerning the position of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in the present world emergency, and for the information of the many others who, although they have not inquired, nevertheless look to the Congress for a clear and unequivocal declaration of its policies and plans for service in any major phase of national life as it affects American youth, we present the following official statement\* of the role of the Parent-Teacher Association in the program of total defense.

**T**HE PROGRAM of total defense for the American nation presents a vital challenge to every parent-teacher association. This means that whether the association is within an area of intensive armament industry, is near an army training camp, or is seemingly remote from actual defense preparation, the responsibility is inescapable for preserving basic values of the American way of life as they vitally affect American youth.

Three problems compel our immediate attention. First, the problem of coping with the following conditions growing out of the inability of the average community adjacent to an army camp to make adequate provision for the young men called to service:

1. Lack of wholesome recreational facilities
2. Shortage of desirable commercial amusements
3. Inadequacy of health services and sanitary facilities
4. Existence of commercialized vice
5. Unwholesome influence on the boys and girls of the community resulting from disturbed community relationships

Second, the problem of coping with difficulties connected with large emergency settlements established for essential war industries. Some of these are:

1. Lack of adequate housing facilities
2. Lack of facilities to safeguard health and general well-being, including adequate water supply, sanitation, nursing, medical service
3. Overtaxing of local school facilities with resultant shortage in trained teachers, seating capacity, and textbooks
4. Increase in liquor traffic, gambling, and prostitution
5. Increase in juvenile delinquency

\* A supplementary list of specific defense activities was published in the November issue of the *National Congress Bulletin*.

6. Lack of community loyalty and responsibility on part of influx population
7. Unbalanced spending

Third, the problem of maintaining normal human relationships and providing normal community services in a national emergency. Among the conditions to be met in this area are:

1. Inadequacy of funds for maintenance of community services
2. Shortage of trained local leaders with vision and ability
3. Attitudes of fear, cynicism, and selfishness
4. Lack of appreciation of spiritual values

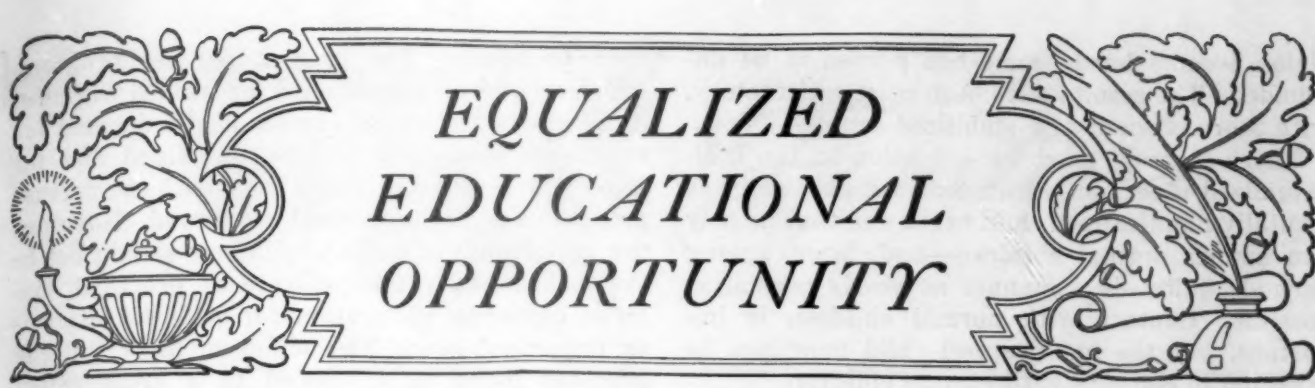
The Parent-Teacher Association, motivated by long-established concern for the well-being of children and youth, accepts its responsibility in the challenge presented by total defense in America. By intensified planning, effort, and sacrifice, assisting and cooperating with defense councils and other agencies, the Parent-Teacher Association will help in the adjustment of the community to the emergency of national defense and the continuation of ideals, traditions, and institutions basic to the American way of life.

To that end parent-teacher associations of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers will:

1. Conduct community surveys in the fields of health, housing, sanitation, recreation, education, and other phases of family and group living to determine what essential services must be maintained and what extra provision must be made to meet defense conditions.
2. Follow up the needs disclosed by such surveys. For example:
  - a. Utilize available facilities of schools, libraries, churches, and other community buildings to provide wholesome recreation
  - b. Assist with the organization of vocational classes in the Defense Education program
  - c. Encourage provision for adequate housing, sanitation, and health services
  - d. Provide increased opportunities for adult education encompassing family and group living, the processes of government, and the responsibilities of citizenship
  - e. Provide opportunity for participation in community activities by "new" families on all economic and social levels
  - f. Discourage the influx of facilities for harmful amusement and recreation
  - g. Cooperate with law enforcement officers and other public officials in maintaining wholesome community environment

Total defense must begin with a strengthening of faith in American ideals and traditions so that America may continue to offer a haven for love, freedom, truth, and justice in a world beset with tyranny and oppression.





## EQUALIZED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

**A**MERICA has ever been imbued with the ideal of free and equal educational opportunity for all its children "irrespective of race, color, or religion, wherever they may live under the protection of the American flag."

This is a unique and ambitious objective and one to which no other public school system has ever aspired. Contrary to general opinion, it has never been fully realized. The draft experiences of the last world war rudely awakened America to the fact that thousands of its young men were illiterate.

The White House Conference of 1940 discovered astounding facts concerning educational opportunity in this country, which had proudly boasted of its public school system. In the United States today there are 75,000,000 adults. Of these, 36,000,000 did not finish elementary school, and 18,000,000 cannot read and write.

Over 800,000 children of school age are not enrolled in any school. Many of these are not white children. Some live in remote rural and mountain areas, far from school facilities. Others are physically or mentally handicapped. Nevertheless they are all tomorrow's citizens, and to them will fall the task of shaping the policies of this nation and the future of the world. Their care and education should be our first concern today.

In many communities educational services are totally inadequate. School terms are short, teachers untrained and inexperienced, equipment antiquated or entirely lacking. There are no library facilities, no hot lunches, and no medical or dental care, and the condition of the school plant is unsanitary and unsafe.

This does not mean that such districts are always indifferent to the educational needs of their children. It means that they are financially unable to provide standard educational requirements. For example, the 1940 White House Conference reported that fifty-one per cent of the children live in rural areas where there is only thirty-four per cent of our taxable wealth. Localities rich in children are often poor in dollars.

**T**HE clearer our view of the goal, the more intelligent our plans and our performance. The platform adopted at the 1941 Convention of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers embodies the clearly seen and consciously approved goals of present-day parent-teacher endeavor. This platform is to be interpreted month by month in a series of articles contributed by the vice-presidents of the organization. Through their guiding words the guiding hands of local leaders may find support for programs that mean progress.

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The report of the White House Conference reveals that three states, with the most rigid economy and self-sacrifice, are able to levy taxes sufficient to allocate but thirty dollars per year per child for school support. Three other states are able to allocate one hundred and thirty dollars per child per year, with no special levies.

All too often, educational opportunity for the child depends not upon innate ability or ambition but upon where he lives, the economic status of his family, or the color of his skin. This does not represent equal educational opportunity for "all the children of all the people."

**T**O solve this problem it is necessary to recognize its need and to set up the machinery for its solution. The wealth of the nation, wherever it may be, should be taxed to educate the children of the nation, wherever they are. The taxes should be gathered into a common treasury and redistributed to the children of the country according to need. Thus can educational opportunity be equalized, a maximum of local control be retained, and the loss of educated citizens be prevented.

A similar system has been established in several states, and the fear of local school officials that local control would be entirely lost and state super-



vision become burdensome has proved to be unfounded. The results have been most satisfactory, with more efficient and stabilized schools.

There is great need for attention to the individualized care and training of the physically or mentally handicapped child to the end that he may live among normal children—and, later, among normal adults—in a manner as nearly normal as possible. Contact with normal children is important, but the handicapped child must not be expected to compete with normal children.

Educational services need to be expanded both up and down the scale to cover wider age levels. The precious, impressionable preschool years should not be wasted but capitalized. The education of preschool children is an important and legitimate part of the school system and merits support by public tax funds. Thousands of children from middle-class homes pay for this lack in the public school system. They pay by being unable to adapt themselves to the first grade in the public school, and the public pays in taxes when these children have to "repeat."

**T**HE responsibility of community agencies—not only the public schools, but the public library and all the others—should be everywhere recognized and accepted. Each has a vital contribution to make. Education, in the best and truest sense of the word, is a community affair. Wholehearted participation of all community agencies not only in the training of our children but in the continued education of adults would do much to restore the strong sense of unity and interdependence that made the community lives of our pioneer forefathers so strikingly effective and memorable. Increasing comfort and increasing mechanical efficiency tend to produce dependence on the self-sufficiency of the individual, an undemocratic concept. In a democracy we stand or fall together; together, then, should we make our plans and set about our common enterprises.

There are several other fields in which instruction, both in school and at home, might be brought nearer to adequacy. The study of the effect of alcohol and other narcotics is important, especially as almost every field of human behavior is involved, with problems of health, morality, economic efficiency, and safety.

Education is now accepted as a life process. Interpretation of the term has been extended in many directions, particularly toward education for home and family life. This special emphasis is increasingly essential and has long been promoted by the Parent-Teacher Association. It is known that one is never too young or too old to learn. Every experience serves to teach something. All types of opportunity classes should be

open to adults. The present defense program, which creates an urgent need for trained workmen in all crafts and skills, creates also a demand for vocational education for the untrained and for those who need retraining; thus, both the defense program and the individual are served. However, the importance of cultural subjects should not be overlooked under the pressure of practical, material demands. Education for self-realization is an important need. The achievement of full and gracious living is developed to a great extent through hobbies and special interests, such as music, drama, and other creative arts.

Many schools are doing fine jobs of vocational guidance, seeking to discover the child's abilities and needs and to direct his education accordingly. The recognition of varying abilities and special talents indicates the wisdom of extending and broadening such programs.

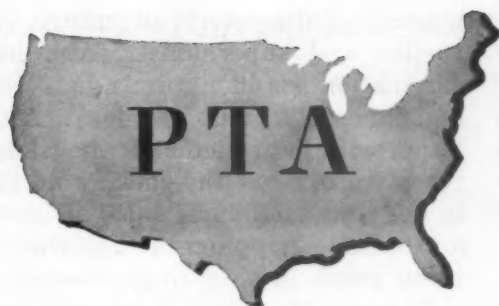
**W**HAT type of school does America want for its children? Is it our honest desire that all children be fully educated according to their needs and abilities? In America, what we want we can have.

The Parent-Teacher Association has a responsibility here, a responsibility assumed and acknowledged before the world at the time of its organization. No other agency can take its place. It is the task of our 28,050 local associations to create public opinion that will brook no half-hearted support of the school system; that will not permit the voice of the politicians and the taxpayers' associations to prevail; that will tolerate no lowering of school standards.

The essential requirement for realization of the American ideal of free public schools for all children is an educated public opinion that is willing to take responsibility for electing strong men to school boards and for supporting forceful and efficient educational leaders in their schools—and willing also to pay the price in tax dollars.

The development of this type of public opinion is uniquely the work of the Parent-Teacher Association, which, existing for the service of youth, is pledged to neglect nothing that will promote youth's welfare. Aggressive support of all measures to educate the public about the schools, consistent work for constructive school legislation, and constant study of the local school program are essential. Making educational opportunity equal and adequate *will* take tax dollars, but expenditures for such a purpose will prove to be wise investments, bringing a rich return in terms of a citizenry intelligent, purposeful, and loyal—to the point of sacrifice, if need be—to the American way of life.

—BLANCHE WILKINSON  
*Vice-President, Region 7*



# Frontiers

## South Dakota

**A Technique That Works.** Out in the heart of the sheep country of South Dakota, fifty miles from the nearest railroad, may be found

a parent-teacher study group that began as an experiment but has proved to be a success.

Quite by accident these courageous P.T.A. folks in the little inland town of Bison stumbled upon a very good technique in group discussion, designated by some authorities as the progressive discussion method. They "thought they were supposed to" divide into four smaller groups for study and discussion, and so they did.

Armed with the *National Parent-Teacher*, with its splendid outlines and rich supporting articles, each little group met and studied a specific phase of the general topic. One person from each group was selected to present the topic to the general P.T.A. meeting.

Through this method there were provided at least four well-informed persons to lead the discussions and approximately twenty well-informed persons to participate from the audience.

When the state office learned of the efforts of this little pioneering group, a box of materials was sent for their parent-teacher bookshelf. Among these were the *Parent Education Yearbooks*, *Our Homes*, copies of the *Proceedings*, and some extra copies of the Magazine.

There are no professional parent education leaders in this little community, but the teachers and the parents are people with courage and with vision. Their contribution to the district conference was outstanding. One member of their group gave a splendid report of the origin and development of their study club. Another member participated in an unrehearsed panel. Her quick thinking and rich source material indicated how she had gained from the group discussions in the local association. Still another member was elected district president for the ensuing two-year term.

Group discussion, by whatever method, is one way of making democracy work. It can be done by a rural group and done exceedingly well.

—GERTRUDE E. FLYTE

## Minnesota

**How to Organize.** Because the parents of high school students are, as a rule, scattered through different sections of a city and may not know one another at all or have any common interests, the organizing of a

high school parent-teacher association presents a difficult problem in many communities. In the junior high school of Rochester, Minnesota, this problem was met by a democratic plan of organization which worked out to the satisfaction of everyone, resulting in a successful P.T.A.

The president of the parent-teacher council asked the president of each grade school P.T.A. to appoint a member to represent his school at an organization meeting. The council president himself appointed the junior high school principal and three teachers to represent the junior high school and three parents to represent the council. One of these parents acted as chairman.

This committee of thirteen drew up the following plan: Each family having a child in the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade was sent a letter explaining that a parent-teacher association was to be formed and asking for cooperation. With the letter was sent a list of all the parents in the grade group to which this particular family belonged. Each parent was asked to study this list and choose his or her candidate for the presidency of the new P.T.A. The name was to be written on a detachable slip at the bottom of the letter provided for this purpose, and the slip returned to the school. The names of the twelve parents in each grade receiving the highest number of votes were then placed on a ballot. The same method was followed among the teachers of the junior high school, the two teachers in each grade who received the highest number of votes having their names put on the ballot.

All junior high school parents and teachers were then called to a general meeting for which an excellent speaker had been procured. After the speaker's address the ballots, which had been prepared on sheets of colored paper, a different color being used for each grade, were given out. Parents and teachers of each of the three grades



represented were asked to vote for six of the twelve parents and one of the two teachers whose names appeared on the ballot.

By this method a group of eighteen parents and three teachers was elected. This group formed an organization committee which was representative of the whole parent-teacher body.

It was understood that the duty of this committee was to adopt bylaws and elect officers from among its members. This it did at an organization meeting in the spring. Program, membership, publicity, and hospitality committees were then appointed. These worked during the summer months to complete the organization, with the result that when school opened in the fall the parent-teacher association was functioning smoothly, with 468 members enrolled.

—ANNE PEMBERTON

#### Wyoming

**No Nation Is Better Than Its Literature.** Do you know what your community's newsstands have to offer its youth? Are you interested?

If so, make a trip down town and check the material your newsdealer has on sale. It is the moral obligation of every parent and teacher to be alert to those forces which operate to weaken the minds and lower the moral standards of the young.

Never before in the history of our country have we had such an abundance of constructive reading material for children and adults. Books well written and beautifully illustrated are priced within the reach of even the extremely modest budget. Educators, civic-minded parents, and religious leaders find their efforts well supported by this inspiring output of good literature. But books offered for sale and books widely read are not the same thing. Many of us are so busy with the complexities of daily living that we are unaware of the ever increasing flood of unwholesome literature which threatens the undoing of much that we have worked to accomplish in the way of character building. The "comic"

magazines of mystery, adventure, violence, action-thrills, and superhuman feats have a curious fascination for immature minds (including those of supposedly adult persons). After this inoculation with light pictorials the adolescent youth is receptive to what the cheap pulp magazines have to offer, in their lurid tales of love, sex, violence and crime, gripping the imagination at an age when youth is most impressionable.

Obscene literature is an evil of such proportions as to undermine seriously the moral, social, and political life of our country. To provide an adequate remedy for this alarming condition, it is necessary to organize and set into motion the moral forces of the entire nation, for history demonstrates that no nation can long survive when respect has been lost for the moral law. And this need is emphasized in a national emergency.

The Wyoming Congress of Parents and Teachers launched an intensive state-wide campaign, with the hearty endorsement and cooperation of the city and state libraries and civic and religious organizations, as well as the general public. Co-operating wholeheartedly in this campaign are also the state superintendent of public instruction and the city superintendents of public schools. Contributions from various organizations have made stationery and stamps available. A periodical bulletin is circulated throughout the state, along with newspaper articles emphasizing the value of constructive literature. Radio is used, also, as a medium of publicity. Already gratifying results have been accomplished by securing newsdealer cooperation.

A famous jurist once said, "The people usually get what they want." They get what they want if they are willing to fight for it. The reason law-enforcing officers are lethargic and judges and juries ultraliberal in their decisions concerning obscenity in print is that decent people have not asserted themselves. Thus a vociferous minority wields a powerful influence because of our neglect.

—IRENE COSTER HERRINGTON

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*If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.*

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU



# Parent-Teacher Study Course Outlines

Study courses directed by ADA HART ARLITT

## DEFENSE BEGINS AT HOME—

**Article:** WHO IS TO BLAME? — By Muriel W. Brown (See Page 4)

### I. Pertinent Points

1. This war, while it affects more individuals than have ever been affected in previous times, presents few new home problems in the development of morale in children. All questions to be answered may be summarized under two heads. Is what we are doing good for the child? Does it give him what he needs for normal growth and development?
2. "The qualities that will be needed for this task are those for which Juvenal prayed long, long ago: a sound mind in a sound body; a brave heart wholly free from the fear of death; a heart which can 'bear all hardships, cannot lose its temper over trifles, covets nothing, and is persuaded that the bitter labors of Hercules have more salvation in them than the lust and luxury of Sardanapalus'; 'humility and pride; plodding business-ways and the wings of ambition; a will both stubborn and flexible'; and 'above all, the grace of simplicity of purpose.'"
3. Human relationships underlie all of the causes and conditions which predispose toward war or peace. Training in sound values in regard to human relationships is the responsibility of both the home and the school.

### II. Questions to Promote Discussion

1. How may the home work to build up morale?
2. How far should the school teach sound character and good morale?
3. What are some practices that help and some practices that tend to break down morale at home and in school?
4. In what ways can parent-teacher associations cooperate with the home and the school in the development of good character qualities and the teaching of human relationships?

### References:

Blatz, W. E.: *Hostages to Peace*. New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1940.

Overstreet, Bonaro W.: *Brave Enough for Life*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941.

#### Defense Digest

- a. Winning the Peace
- b. Freedom of the People
- c. Education in the Army

(American Association for Adult Education, 525 West 120th Street, N. Y. C. 10 cents.)

## HOW WE GROW—

**Article:** WHOSE HOME IS THIS? — By C. Madeline Dixon (See Page 15)

### I. Pertinent Points

1. The home is the property of every member of the family, but the use of the home should be guided and determined by each member in proportion to his wisdom and experience.
2. The attitudes that parents take toward work and play are reflected in the behavior of their children. Love for good workmanship and a desire to give his best are the result of the training and the experience a child has in his own home, using as his tools the materials of his daily life.
3. Home attitudes are the most important factor in producing a sense of security. One of the greatest assets a child can have is a sense of security and faith in his parents and in the stability of his home.

### II. Questions to Promote Discussion

1. What are some ways in which cooperation, a desire to work, and good work attitudes may be developed in children under school age?
2. In what ways do the relations between parents help or hinder the development of their children?
3. Give some illustrations of good home attitudes and good home procedures.
4. What are some attitudes and procedures which should be avoided as far as possible for best results in family living?
5. How far should the child have a part in making the rules that govern the household and the rules that govern his own behavior?

### References:

Justin, Margaret M., and Rust, Lucile Osborn: *Home and Family Living*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1941.

Manwell, Elizabeth M., and Fahs, Sophia L.: *Consider the Children—How They Grow*. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1941.

Baruch, Dorothy W.: "Leave Your Children Alone," *National Parent-Teacher*, August-September, 1940.

Meek, Lois Hayden, Ph.D.: *Your Child's Development and Guidance*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1940.

Rand, Winifred; Sweeny, Mary E.; and Vincent, E. Lee: *Growth and Development of the Young Child*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1940. Chapters VIII and IX.

# CHILDREN'S BOOK LIST

MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

## 1. CHIEFLY PICTURES

*Find the Animals.* Dorothy King. Illustrated in color by Joseph Sica. Harcourt, Brace; \$1.50. For little children: circus animals, cut from cardboard and handsomely colored, are to be put back into real cages.

*Peter Churchmouse.* Margot Austin. Dutton; \$1. Hilarious tale for four-year-olds of the friendship of a mouse and a kitten: many pictures.

*Paddle-to-the-Sea.* Written and pictured in color by Holling C. Holling. Houghton Mifflin; \$2. Unusual story of a miniature canoe; large color plates and picture-maps; fine introduction, for small children, to geography of the Great Lakes region.

*The Little Geography of the United States.* Text and pictures by Mable Pyne. Houghton Mifflin; \$2. Companion volume to the same artist-author's *Little History of the United States*, using the same fascinating blend of text and small, lively pictures.

*Leif the Lucky.* The D'Aulaires. Doubleday, Doran; \$2. Authentic text, glorious lithographs.

*History of the United States for Young People.* Arensa Sondergaard. Colored pictures by Cornelis. Random House; \$1. For somewhat older children than the Pyne history, but with so many colored pictures that young children will like it.

*An American ABC.* Maud and Miska Petersham. Macmillan; \$2. Noble color plates of scenes in our history, one for each letter; an investment as well as a pleasure.

*Franzi and Gizi.* Bianco and Loeffler. Messner; \$2. Jolly, brilliant pictures of distinction: little children in the woods.

*The Oldest Story in the World.* Retold from the first chapter of Genesis. Illustrated by Marie Stern. Little, Brown; \$1.50. Illustrated at every step with colored pictures any little child finds charming.

*A Bible ABC.* Grace Allen Hogarth. Stokes; \$1. Children as young as three find delight in this pretty book; it's a help to mothers also.

*Broad Stripes and Bright Stars.* Beatrice Grover. Grey-stone; \$1. Written and illustrated for a five-year-old, to tell him all about the flag.

## II. FOR CHILDREN BEGINNING TO READ ABOUT ANIMALS

*Macgregor.* Dorothy L'Hommedieu. Illustrated by Marguerite Kirmse. Lippincott; \$1.50. Jolly tale of a competent Scottie; he adopted three kittens whose mother had warned them against dogs.

*Fancy Be Good.* Story and pictures by Audrey Chalmers. Viking; \$1. A funny kitten story.

*Nothing at All.* Wanda Gag. Coward-McCann; \$1.50. The creator of *Millions of Cats* tells the adventures of an invisible dog, with pictures of him!

*Walt Disney's Bambi.* Simon and Schuster; \$1. Adapted from the famous novel, for children beginning to read, or to read aloud to them; more than a souvenir of the screen, for the pictures have genuine beauty.

*High Courage.* C. W. Anderson. Illustrated by the author. Macmillan; \$1.75. Fine horse story, for any child who loves fine horses.

*Susannah the Pioneer Cow.* Miriam Mason. Illustrated by the Petershams. Macmillan; \$1. Fine for first readers: many pretty pictures and a story of crinoline days.

*Rory O'Mory.* By Maurice O'Brien. Illustrated by Richard MacGraw. Longmans, Green; \$1.50. Nonsense story of a fox that chased a hunter; distinctive drawings and a fine idea back of it.

*Timmy.* Eleanor Youmans. Pictures by Will Rannels. Bobbs, Merrill; \$1.75. Cocker spaniel with a mysterious background.

*There Was a Horse.* Edited by Phyllis Fenner. Illustrated by Henry C. Pitz. Knopf; \$2. Folk tales about horses; thrilling stories with many pictures to match.

## III. FOR CHILDREN WHO LIKE PICTURES AND STORIES

*The Story of Simpson and Sampson.* Munro Leaf. Illustrated by Robert Lawson. Viking; \$1.50. You couldn't tell these twins apart, and as they grew up to be medieval knights, armor didn't help. One was good and the other was bad.

*I Discover Columbus.* Story and pictures by Robert Lawson. Little, Brown; \$1.50. History as it might have happened—and didn't. Anyone could have fun with this parrot's account of what Columbus did on the voyage.

*Elin's Amerika.* Story and pictures in color by Marguerite De Angeli. Doubleday, Doran; \$2. Story of little girl with the first Swedish settlement on the Delaware.

*The Colt from Moon Mountain.* Story and pictures by Dorothy Lothrop. Macmillan; \$1.50. Touching variant of the story of the unicorn, taking place on an American farm.

*Stephen Foster and his Little Dog Tray.* Opal Wheeler. Illustrated by Mary Greenwalt. Dutton; \$2. One of a series of deservedly popular musical biographies for young children; the feature is the introduction into the text of pieces the children will be able and glad to play.

*Tagalong Tooloo.* Frances Cladee Sayers. Illustrated by Helen Sewell. Viking; \$1.50. Little girl in Texas.

*Three Prayers.* Illustrated by Pelagie Doane. Grosset and Dunlap; \$1. Beautiful large colored plates illustrating familiar prayers: a gracious picture book.

*Little Town.* Story and pictures by the Haders. Macmillan; \$2. Eighty pictures take young children all over a typical town.

*The Ferryman.* Claire Huchet Bishop. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. Coward-McCann; \$1.50. Folk story with a catch to it; picture for every page.

*The Saturdays.* Elizabeth Enright. Pictures by the author. Farrar and Rinehart; \$1.75. Ten-year-olds enjoy this story of how each member of a lively family spent Saturday.

*Phoebe-Belle.* Irmengarde Eberle. Pictures by Fritz Eich-



enberg. Greystone; \$1.25. One of the best hen stories I've read; handsome pictures.

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice.* Richard Rostron. Pictures in color by Frank Lieberman. Morrow; \$1.75. Ancient folk tale brightly retold, with characteristic pictures.

#### IV. SOUTH AMERICA, AND OUR PAST

*Wings Around South America.* Alice Dalgliesh. Pictures in color by Katherine Milhous. Scribner; \$2.50. Best introduction to the continent; result of two-month air-tour by author and artist.

*Story of the Other America.* Richard Gill and Helen C. Hoke. Pictures by Manuel Rivers Regalado. Houghton Mifflin; \$2. Pictorial history for younger readers.

*Picture Map Geography of South America.* By Verbon Quinn. Maps by P. S. Johst. Stokes; \$1.50. Graphic descriptions for somewhat older children.

*He Wouldn't be King.* Nina Brown Baker. Illustrated. Vanguard; \$2.50. Life of Bolivar, for older children.

*Yankee Doodle's Cousins.* Anne Malcolmson. Illustrated by Robert MacCloskey. Houghton Mifflin; \$2.50. Stories of our folk heroes, such as Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, Johnny Appleseed, and Dan'l Boone.

*Growing Up With America.* Edited by May Lamberton Becker. Stokes; \$2.50. Stories from American children's books, arranged to make a consecutive account of child life in America from Peregrine White to the present. A feature is the use of the original illustrations. Age 10-14.

#### V. GOOD STORIES

*Indian Captive.* Story and pictures by Lois Lenski. Stokes; \$2. The true story of Mary Jemison.

*Sarah Deborah's Day.* Charlotte Jackson. Pictures in color by Marc Simont. Dodd, Mead; \$2. Gold-rush days, when much could happen on a first day at school.

*The Matchlock Gun.* W. D. Edmonds. Illustrated in color by Paul Lantz. Dodd, Mead; \$2. Remarkable story of a boy's heroism in the Indian wars before the Revolution: the pictures are most exciting.

*Nathaniel's Witch.* Katherine Gibson. Illustrated by Bock. Longmans, Green; \$2. Beautifully told tale of a good witch of Salem and how she was released from enchantment: a story for Christmas.

*The Long Christmas.* Ruth Sawyer. Illustrated by Valenti Angelo. Viking; \$2.50. A story for each day from Christmas to Epiphany.

*Little Town on the Prairie.* Laura Ingalls Wilder. Illustrated by Helen Sewell and Mildred Boyle. Harper; \$2. In a series of books every American child should know, but complete in itself. From personal experience a long time ago. 10 up.

*Sing for Your Supper.* Lenora Mattingly Weber. Illustrated by Ninon MacKnight. Crowell; \$2. Funny story of a wagon-show theatrical company in old California. 12 up.

*Luck of the Comstocks.* Maribelle Cormack and John Alexander. D. Appleton-Century; \$2. Adventure story of Block Island, with Leif Ericsson's relics coming into it. 12 up.

#### VI. BIOGRAPHIES FOR THE EARLY TEENS

*Poor Richard.* Text and pictures by James Daugherty. Viking; \$2.50. Franklin's life.

*The Shoemaker's Son.* Constance Buel Burnet. Random House; \$2.50. Sympathetic, thoughtful life of Hans Christian Andersen.

*Isabella, Young Queen of Spain.* Mildred Griss. Illustrated by Marc Simont. Dodd, Mead; \$2.50. Columbus's queen, and her furiously exciting childhood and youth.

*Narcissa Whitman.* Jeanette Eaton. Illustrated by Woodi Ishmael. Harcourt, Brace; \$2.50. True, romantic, thrilling life of a great missionary to the Indians of Oregon.

*Drama of the Sun.* Alfred H. Fenton. Farrar and Rinehart; \$2. A great newspaperman's life, told for boys who want to be newspapermen.



Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

—JOHN WESLEY'S RULE

Follow John Wesley's Rule and give  
the National Parent-Teacher  
for Christmas



# BOOKS *in Review*



**BIG FAMILY.** By *Bellamy Partridge*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1941. \$2.75

**B**OTH those who believe big families would solve all the problems of child training and those who grew up in big families and long to go back to the good old days will enjoy this account of the doings of a large family, seen from the eyes of one of the younger boys. He presents the hazards and heartaches of the seniority system as carried out by his legal-minded father; the ways in which manners, cleanliness, punctuality, godliness, and sex information were inculcated in spite of rebellion, hilarity, and the usual propensity of the human animal to resist any threats to his own wishes and desires.

Father, human and shrewd, understanding boys and girls, fond of jokes, often aids and abets the children in their schemes to enjoy life. Mother, serious and good, worrying about her children's morals and behavior and what the neighbors will think, binds the family together by her own intense love for them. Strong family loyalty is fostered and holds each member in intimate contact with the rest through all the years, even to frequent reunions with reliving of all the family jokes and the adoption of mother's solidarity methods of raising a family in the next generation—which, by the way, is scattered all over the world.

—ESTHER MCGINNIS, *Professor of Family Life, State Teachers College, Buffalo*

**BRAVE ENOUGH FOR LIFE.** By *Bonaro W. Overstreet*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941. 206 pp., \$2.50.

**I** HAVE found this an easy book to read, though not one to read at a sitting, for there is hardly a page without some paragraph to mark or some passage to ponder. It is, first, the outline of the life philosophy of a woman of culture and broad human experience. It is, second, a thoughtful analysis of the present world-wide turmoil, in which, so it seems to the author, man's mechanical ingenuity has far outstripped his ability to adjust his human relationships. And, third, it is, though only sketchily, an autobiography.

These are days of crisis. Disheartened by the reverses of Old World democracies, staggered by

the ruthlessness of totalitarian doctrines, and confused by the seeming indecisiveness of our own leaders, it is not unnatural that you and I and people everywhere should feel the need of some definite scheme of endeavor, something to prepare and steady us in the "dark days ahead." For Mrs. Overstreet there can be only one answer:

"I must gather and keep whatever I have experienced with people that has given me confidence in people. Others may strengthen themselves in other ways. But this is my way. Everything I do—my work, my thinking, even my enjoyment of the beautiful—is tied up somehow with my feeling that I am intimately part of a human scheme of things. If the sense of fellowship were to go, everything would go. I should be spiritually paralyzed: one thing to do would seem as good as another, and to do nothing at all would seem equally good. But if I can hold fast to all the human beings who have won my loyalty and love—then I can face the winter."

**T**HIS, then, may be called the cornerstone of her philosophical structure. And it is in the light of this philosophy that she acknowledges her debt to her "spiritual ancestors": Socrates, Epictetus, St. Francis, George Fox, Erasmus, John Locke, Lincoln, Jane Addams; to her parents and neighbors; to those writers and guides who helped her to adulthood; and to her fellow-workers in the field of adult education. Every one was a person who said in effect, "For the sake of the decency and dignity of mankind, it is necessary—in spite of passing moods and impulses, in spite of threats and ridicule—to do thus and so and not otherwise." To read this reminder that character, the sense of fellowship and brotherhood, is a vitamin as indispensable to the health of society in a war-torn world as it has always been in the simpler religious faith of the past is to see firm and familiar reality emerge clear and true from present fear and hesitation.

It is no fanciful thing—this seeking human associations and friendships. It implies responsibility for the welfare of others and an impassioned effort to create situations from which more and more people can derive happiness. At the close of her book the author says to us, "This is not the kind of world where fate can be expected to give me, free of charge, all I need in the way of comradeship. . . . The only way I can expect to enjoy

the comradeship of those whom I most respect is by trying to help along the grand ideas they have helped to keep alive in the world."

I think this is a book for our times, but one that will survive and continue to interest those who come after us. I recommend it to all parents and teachers, to all who have some responsibility for giving direction to the philosophy of young people, and especially to young people themselves. The author is rigidly honest and practical. She has a gift for impressing her personality upon her writing.

—GUY R. LYLE, *Librarian, Woman's College of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro*

COMING OF AGE. By *Esther Lloyd-Jones and Ruth Fedder*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1941. 280 pp., \$2.50.

THIS book is written for young people sixteen to twenty-five years of age. It is intended for individual reading, discussion groups, and formal school classes. Much of the content is based on data gathered in interviews with young people. The book is filled with direct quotations describing problems and reactions, not as adults see them but as young people see them. In the chapter discussing adjustments in family relationships, for example, there appear numerous quotations contributed by young people, describing in their own terms happy and unhappy family experiences, family problems, and youth's reactions to the more difficult family situations. Similarly, the chapters concerned with relations with the opposite sex, getting established in a vocation, continuing one's education both in and out of college, and building a philosophy of life are filled with material gleaned

from interviews. In addition, the authors use the findings of many surveys and studies. Thus youth and age (experience) combine to develop a plan of adjustment.

THE MAJOR PROBLEMS of marriage, family life, vocational choice, education, and life philosophy are considered. In addition, there are two valuable chapters on personality needs and the forces determining personality development. The idea of a book addressed to young people and discussing their problems is sound. Studies have indicated that when young people gain an insight into the development of human behavior and the problems that arise as one approaches maturity and gains access to alternative suggestions for solving problems they are more able to make effective adjustments. Basing the discussion on material contributed by young people and interpreting the problems in terms that young people understand and use is also most helpful.

It may be, however, that the discussions are somewhat too lengthy. Most young people would like to see the authors come to the point more quickly and set forth more concisely the major suggestions for attacking the problems of achieving independence, status, comradeship, and continued growth.

However, here is a book that parents can suggest to young people as containing most helpful and realistic discussions of youth problems. Parents will also profit by learning of youth's attitudes as revealed in the extensive first-hand material included.

—RALPH H. OJEMANN, *Associate Professor, Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, State University of Iowa*

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*The finest music in the room is that which streams out to the ear of the spirit in many an exquisite strain from the little shelf of books on the opposite wall. Every volume there is an instrument which some melodist of the mind created and set vibrating with music.*

—JAMES LANE ALLEN

*Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,  
Are a substantial world, both pure and good.  
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.*

—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



# Around the Editor's Table

EVERYTHING to be endured, nothing to be done," has never been the slogan of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. And because it could never endure the plight of children who did not have the necessary advantage of a decent and nutritious lunch, it has long promoted school lunch projects in schools throughout the country. It was natural, therefore, that when the WPA sought an organization to assume the leadership for its "Community School Lunch" it should turn to the National Congress to fix public attention upon this national problem and to carry on a major part of the investigative and organizational work.

Participating also are the public health departments, the U. S. Office of Education, and other governmental agencies. The Department of Agriculture has adopted the slogan, "Two extra rows in your garden for your school lunch." This strong, active, and purposeful interest is yet another heartening sign of the times; it reveals anew how greatly heightened is the concern of our nation for the welfare of all the people.

A check list has been prepared as a means of determining the assets and liabilities of lunch programs as they are being carried on at present in various communities—specifically, to determine the number being served, the number that should be served, and the standards achieved in the program by each community. These standards are set up and explained in the book *Technical Setup* and in a work book prepared on the level of the worker in the school. Both books may be obtained from regional WPA offices.

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The present age makes great claims upon the people of America, none greater than that child welfare services be preserved and extended among the republics of this hemisphere. It was with keen satisfaction that the announcement was read concerning the place selected for the Eighth Pan-American Child Congress. It is none other than the city of Washington in the United States of America, and the dates are May 2-9, 1942.

The Congress will be divided into three sections: health protection and medical care, education and recreation, and economic and social services for families and children. An important part of the program planned for the general sessions will be the examination of the goals of the Americas for their children as expressed in resolutions

adopted by the Pan-American Congresses, and a discussion of progress made toward these goals since the Seventh Pan-American Congress. In this discussion the major aspects of inter-American cooperation as related to child welfare will be covered, with continued emphasis on effective methods of promoting and strengthening child welfare services. These methods include exchange of professors and students, correspondence, consultation services, radio broadcasts, and exchange of bulletins. Miss Katharine Lenroot, who has on two occasions served as chairman of the United States delegation to the Pan-American Child Congress, is chairman of the organization of the Eighth Pan-American Child Congress. Mrs. William Kletzer, our national president, is a member of the Advisory Committee on Arrangements.

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Perhaps it is the anticipation of our own radio program, "Defense Begins at Home," which will go on the air shortly, that makes us even more interested than usual in radio programs. In any event, the attention of parents and teachers is called to the radio program sponsored by the Children's Bureau, "Raising a President," which may be heard over the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company, Mondays at 11:30-11:45 a.m., Eastern Standard Time.

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Federal Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt has summoned "all education" to national defense. The call is a challenge to constructive exchange of ideas in discussion groups to be known as "Freedom's Forums," conducted in schools, churches, libraries, clubs, and rural organizations. A manual, "How to Participate," is being sent to thousands of educators and to civic groups.

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An article which should appeal strongly to parents and teachers appears in the November issue of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. For the article "What We Think the Schools Should Do" is the outgrowth of a survey of opinion based on the question, "How may we, as teachers, join with other members of a community in an attempt to arrive at an intelligent understanding of the function of our schools and to establish a basis of mutual respect and faith that will lead to successful cooperation?" The answers, forcefully presented and interpreted, will stimulate fruitful thinking.



## Guardians of Good Will

**P**EACE ON EARTH, good will to men" is more than a Christmas prayer for this coming year. It is a cry in the hearts of millions of people today who are fearful of what the year will bring should it go unheeded. As wise men years ago brought treasures to honor childhood, society today should be prepared to bring to all children the precious heritage of good birth, careful nurture, moral development, and protection from blighting home and community influences. Only so can children grow to manhood and womanhood ready to participate in and enhance the life of the world. It is society's responsibility to provide these advantages where they rightfully belong.

All about us a feeling of insecurity exists; but it is not so with little children. They alone enjoy life utterly and superbly, with no fear for the world they will inherit and no suspicion of how we fear it for them.

And this is as it should be. There is need as never before to bring into our homes and communities the true spirit of Christmas, with the gathering together of families, relatives, and less fortunate persons who are unable to be at home for the holidays. There is need for community enterprises and recreational entertainments in church, school, and home. American youth must be protected and safeguarded against those factors which contribute to crime and delinquency.

The holiday seasons, each with its particular colorful emphasis, may be rich in valuable material for such safeguarding. For instance, Halloween once offered an opportunity for vandalism and "gang" activities; but because of parent guidance, public sentiment, and enforcement of laws, those activities have turned from destruction of property to wholesome diversions for children and adults alike. On the Halloween just past, several groups of neighborhood children called at our door, and with each ring of the bell happy and excited snatches of song could be heard. The pleasure of laughing with the children over their gay and ghostly costumes and of bringing them apples and cookies to share was in sharp contrast to the experience of former years. These are the memories that children will enjoy for years to come.

So, at Christmas, we find another opportunity to provide happiness for children in the love of family and friends and in the satisfaction of service to others; a hope for humanity through the ages lies in the angels' words

"Peace on earth, good will to men."

—REHAN S. WEST, National Chairman  
Committee on Juvenile Protection

## CHILDREN IN A DEMOCRACY

### Program Outline

#### Growing in Spiritual Stature

Refer to the following articles in this issue:

A CREED FOR CHRISTMAS, PAGE 3

I LIKE MOTHERS—FATHERS ARE NICE, TOO, PAGE 8

LISTEN . . . DO YOU HEAR ANY ANGELS? PAGE 19

#### Case Study

As Helen and Father were working together, Helen noticed some daffodils reflected in a wet milk pan. It made her think a poem, which she repeated to Father:

"The shining tin usefulness of the milk pan  
Is glorified into beauty

By the presence of a flower."

"So it is," said Father appreciatively. "That's quite a pretty poem, especially the last phrase."

Helen knew it was pretty. Why had she said it aloud except to make Father think what a remarkable child she was? . . . She washed the dishes thoughtfully, feeling a gnawing discomfort . . . "Father, I only told you that poem because I thought it would make you think what a poetic child I am," she suddenly confessed. "It wasn't really that I thought so much about the flower."

There now! Father would think what an honest, sincere child she was! . . . Oh, dear! As bad as the first time! "And I only owned up because I thought it would make you think I'm honest and didn't want to show off . . . why, Father—do you suppose I only said that, too, to make you . . . Father, do you ever get going like that?" \*

#### Fundamental Questions and Problems

1. How would you answer Helen's question?
2. At what age is a child most likely to ask questions involving honesty and sincerity?
3. Discuss: Jane's mother had a part-time job. Her father's business kept him occupied all week; he was too harassed by his work to be patient with Janey's personal problems. Most of Jane's friends were interested in church activities. When she tried to discuss her spiritual needs with her parents, they told her to select any church she wanted, to go as often as she liked, and they would try to accompany her whenever they could. How common is this situation?

Comment: The home is the place where spiritual values must be instilled and nurtured.

#### How Would You Answer the Following?

1. A child's earliest notion of what is right and wrong, good or bad, is largely determined by the rules laid down by his elders. True. False.
2. Mother, why is it wrong to copy? What is the difference between a white lie and a black lie? When I pray are you sure God hears me?
3. The function of the school is primarily to teach the child those skills which will enable him to live successfully in society. T. F.
4. There is no general trait that can be labeled honesty. A child who lies in one situation may be honorable in another. T. F.
5. If a child's intelligence is a little below average he will be neither generous nor honest. T. F.
6. The idea of democracy has no meaning without religious or spiritual attitudes toward life. T. F.

\*Adapted from *The Home-Maker*, by Dorothy Canfield Fisher. (Harcourt, Brace and Co.)

# GUIDING THE HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

## Program Outline

### The Importance of Being Understood

Refer to the following articles in this issue:

SOME PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE, PAGE 11  
TWO LOYALTIES, PAGE 24

#### Case Study

Sixteen-year-old George approached his father dubiously. "Dad," he said with some hesitation. "A bunch of us want to go to the defense rally and watch the parade tonight. We—"

"Tomorrow's a school day, isn't it?"

George braced himself visibly. "Yes. But—"

"No buts about it. You have your homework to do. You rally to the defense of your chemistry mark, my boy; that will do you for the present."

"Dad—"

"I don't want you running the streets at night. You and your gang of irresponsibles are feather-brained enough as it is. At your age I was making responsible plans for the future."

"Well, but look here, Dad, it's a man's civic duty—"

Mr. Keith laughed. "A man! That's good; that's excellent. No, sir; you postpone your civic duty until you're dry behind the ears, and concentrate on what's your only important duty right here and now—your studies. That'll do. Not another word."

#### Fundamental Questions and Problems

1. If George had disobeyed his father, believing that he was old enough to have some choice in the matter, would he have been right or wrong?

2. Cite specific instances or situations which revealed that your teen-aged child was trying to assert his independence.

3. How do the problems your child faces today differ from those you faced at his age?

4. What are some of the ways in which adolescents can be treated as grown-ups rather than as children?

5. How can parents help their children to conquer their fears and worries?

6. What suggestions have you for improving the school program as an aid to young people with their personal problems? What services should the community provide?

7. Boys and girls in the three upper grades of high school were asked to check the things about which they and their parents disagreed.\* The sources of disagreement are listed in order of frequency:

Getting in at night

Number of times out on school nights

Grades at school

Spending money

Use of the family car

Choice of friends

Church and Sunday School attendance

Home duties (tending furnace, cooking, and so forth)

Mode of dress

Going to unchaperoned parties

Sunday observance, aside from going to church and Sunday school

Other sources of disagreement

Membership in clubs and societies

Do not disagree

Discuss these conflicts. To what extent are they typical in your experience?

\*Lynd, Robert S. and Helen M., *Middletown*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc.

## Contributors

THOMAS H. BRIGGS is professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University. His eminence in the profession has been recognized by appointments to various national commissions and committees. He was chairman of the Dean's Advisory Committee and the Faculty Committee to prepare for the World Congress on Education for Democracy held at Teachers College several years ago.

MURIEL W. BROWN, outstanding consultant in family life education in the U.S. Office of Education, has lectured on the development of homemaking programs for youth and adults to home economics education workers all over the country. Included in her wide range of activities is much literary work on various phases of family life education. She has cooperated closely with many parent-teacher associations.

A. L. CRABB's Plum Springs stories have long endeared him to the parent-teacher public. Dr. Crabb, a native of Kentucky, is professor of education at Peabody College and editor of the *PEABODY JOURNAL*.

C. MADELEINE DIXON, a versatile artist who began her career in the Sybert School of Child Study, later became director of a nursery school and, after studying the dance in both Europe and America, taught student teachers in New York and Philadelphia. More recently she has been associated with the Harriet Johnson Nursery School. One of her best-known books is *High, Wide and Deep*.

MARION L. FAEGRE, well-known child guidance expert, spent five years directing a small nursery school and two years supervising a preschool behavior clinic. She is now assistant professor of education at the Institute of Child Welfare, University of Minnesota.

PHYLLIS FENNER is noted for her children's literature, including the book *There Was a Horse*. Her main interest is children's writings, about which she would like to do a book when she can find time from her teaching and library work. The latter is carried on at Plandome Road School, Manhasset, New York; the former, at St. John's University.

BONARO W. OVERSTREET is one of the foremost adult educators in the country. The most recent publication of this talented educator, writer, and poet is the book *Brave Enough for Life*, which is reviewed in this month's issue.

JAMES S. PLANT, M.D., is director of the Sussex County Juvenile Clinic in Newark, New Jersey. He is nationally known in connection with many educational groups and is the author of numerous articles on psychiatry and psychology. His book, *Personality and the Cultural Pattern*, is an authority in its field.

For the children's book list we are indebted to MAY LAMBERTON BECKER, distinguished children's book review editor of the *New York Herald-Tribune*.

The following parent-teacher leaders are responsible for this month's "P.T.A. Frontiers": Mrs. J. C. Lepler, President, South Dakota Congress, and Mrs. Gertrude E. Flyte, National Chairman of the Committee on Art; Mrs. S. E. Linsley, President, Minnesota Congress, and Mrs. John deJ. Pemberton, past president of the Junior High P.T.A., Rochester; Mrs. Fred J. Peterson, President, and Mrs. Irene Coster Herrington, a District Director, Wyoming Congress.